NOMAD'S LAND

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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NOMAD'S LAND

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

NOMAD'S LAND
THE RED LAMP
TEMPERAMENTAL PEOPLE
THE OUT TRAIL
THE BREAKING POINT
A POOR WISE MAN
DANGEROUS DAYS
THE AMAZING INTERLUDE
"K"
BAB: A SUB-DEB
TISH
MORE TISH
SIGHT UNSEEN AND THE CONFESSION
AFFINITIES AND OTHER STORIES
LOVE STORIES
KINGS, QUEENS AND PAWNS
TWENTY-THREE AND A HALF HOURS' LEAVE
"ISN'T THAT JUST LIKE A MAN?"
ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK: GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

NOMAD'S LAND

By
MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

ILLUSTRATED

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Nomad's Land

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Nomad's Land

NOMAD'S LAND

BOOK I

NOMAD'S LAND

CHAPTER I

MY first view of her was under rather flattering conditions. First, it was moonlight; one of those clear white moons of Egypt which was undoubtedly responsible for the madness of Anthony over Cleopatra, since one has only to see divers reliefs of that well-known lady to realize that it *was* madness. And in this moonlight certain austerities and angularities of her outline merged softly into the desert sands and were there lost.

Second, there was a good breeze going, and in this breeze a certain rather overpowering easternliness about her was attenuated to a faint and merely suggestive scent, which was dissipated in the general direction of the Pyramids.

And, third, she offered locomotion. Had she

not turned up, I might still be, like the Sphinx, a fixture in the desert sands, facing the rising sun and being photographed with tourists grouped about me, and my age a matter of public comment and published in Baedeker.

Briefly, I came out of a tent, and there she was. Dressed in her best, jingling with small bells and various necklaces to keep off the evil eye, prone, acquiescent and mild, there she was. I got on her, the two shadowy figures who had been standing on her doubled-up fore legs stepped off, her rear shot up into the air, her forward portion followed suit, another notch let out behind and another in front, and she was up.

So was I.

Far below me were the sands of the Libyan desert; the tall Bedouins had shrunk to insignificance. And Dahabeah turned her long neck and gave me a glance of concentrated hatred.

Dahabeah was a camel.

The Head of the Family, having watched me up, was mounting also.

"How do you like it?" I inquired nervously, when he had described the necessary number of arcs in the air.

"Fine!" he replied in a hollow tone, and turned his head to see if his neck was still working properly.

The nautch girl had twisted up her skirts and

Photograph by Dr. S. M. Rinehart

DAHABEAH NEVER GREW ATTACHED TO ME

Photograph by Dr. S. M. Rinehart

ANY WATER WAS GOOD WATER TO ASSOUR

mounted a donkey; the musicians were trudging along on foot, pipes and ancient drum under their arms. The camel boys, each with what I hoped was a death grip on the rein, began to move, and so did the camels.

"You look great," our host called encouragingly, from the tent. "Like a pair of blooming Arabs! How does it go?"

"Simply wonderful," I returned feebly, and gave my entire and concentrated attention to my mount.

Has any one told me during that first five minutes that I would before long travel a hundred miles on that camel, I would have laughed. Or no, I would not have laughed; one does not laugh during the first few minutes. One is too high for one thing and too busy waiting to see from whence the next jerk is coming. And then there is the strange discovery that neither in front of the saddle nor behind it is there anything whatever. It is like sitting on an Alp.

Added to all this, also, is the circus feeling, and with it a bit of unreality.

Who has not stood on the curbstone and waited for that great moment when, the horsemen and the vans having passed, the cry goes up: "The camels are coming"? And seen the great beasts, nostrils dilated and haughty heads thrust forward, padding down the street? A bit of

another world, brought to us for our admiration and wonder.

And to be for even a moment a portion of this strange world carries a thrill of its own.

But the emotion, in my case, was entirely one-sided. Dahabeah moved off, indeed, at the insistence of a small stick from behind, but neither then nor at any time later did she reveal the smallest interest in me. Later on I was doomed to search in vain for some indication that she so much as knew me; to long to scratch her ears, to rub that sensitive portion of her six-foot neck which seemed forever itchy, and yet forever beyond the reach of her hind foot. But never did I break through her impenetrable reserve.

Indeed, one of my earliest overtures settled an argument between the Head and myself forever. He had said that camels have teeth only in the lower jaw: I had disagreed, largely for controversial purposes. It was then that I approached Dahabeah, and that the dispute was ended.

She snarled, lifted her hare-lip, and revealed both upper and lower sets, in good condition and immediately ready for business.

But that night I was not interested in Dahabeah's teeth. The procession moved off, the nautch girl on her donkey, the musicians afoot, and then ourselves. The Arab gentleman

who had been hastily drawing my horoscope in the sand was left behind; the tent flap dropped, and underneath me a sort of localized earthquake was taking place. We were on our way.

"You like drive her yourself?" asked my camel boy.

"Not just yet," I said firmly and with dignity.

But the ice was broken. From that time on the caravan trip into the desert, which Assour had assured us would make me as "strong as a lions," was a settled thing.

CHAPTER II

Now as long ago as last Christmas the Head and I had had Egypt in mind. And with Egypt, a camel caravan. It was, indeed, from a welter of tissue paper, ribbons and cards that I looked up one day from my wrapping and said:

"What does one wear on a camel?"

And the Head, who was trying to remember where he had hidden some gift or other, said:

"What camel?"

"Any camel," I said largely. "We'll have to make up our minds what to take."

"Judging by the pictures, a sheet and pillow-slip would answer," he said. "But anyhow, why worry? We don't *have* to ride a camel."

But seeing that I felt strongly about it, he suggested a golf suit for himself. And being a consistent person, a golf suit he took and a golf suit later on he wore. But my problem was not so simple.

There is something infuriating to the average woman about the competence of a man's wardrobe. The only anxiety he ever knows is whether it is to be dinner jacket or tail coat. He can pack

a suit-case and be prepared to mount a camel or to meet a king. The matter of riding a cross-saddle on a donkey, in a short tight skirt, never sends a blush to his face, nor does he hobble across sandy wastes in low pumps because he hasn't the strength of mind to wear proper shoes.

No. The Head packed his golf suit, thus tacitly acquiescing in the camel idea, and let it go at that. But I——!

Personally I had had an idea that while men on camels rode between humps, as it were, women were luxuriously housed in a curtained and box-like arrangement, from which ever and anon they peered out, or waved a white and surreptitious hand to some passing gallant. And Assour had fathered this delusion.

"If we do go, Assour," I said one day, "we must be comfortable. Why can't I dress like a Bedouin woman, in something soft and loose. And the doctor the same way?"

"You like go in native costumes?" he said, his eyes brightening. "Sure, madams. Very fine, very comfortable. You make fine Bedouin lady."

It is true that so far all the Bedouin ladies we had seen had been wrapped in a black cloth, generally trailing in the dirt behind and covering them from head to foot. But this had not daunted us, and to the bazaars under Assour's guidance we went and made our purchases.

Then we carried them back to the hotel and put them on!

Over a striped green and white robe the Head wore a brown camel's hair aba or cloak, heavily embroidered in gold thread. The under-robe was girt with a sash of many colors. On his head was a white turban, and over that a gorgeous and brilliantly colored silk scarf, hung with tassels and held in place by a gold cord.

I myself was modestly attired in a gold-colored slip and over it a cloak or aba of turquoise blue silk shot with gold. My head scarf was a brilliant piece of work, and over my nose and extending downward was a thick white veil, which I inhaled and exhaled with each passing breath.

With a single voice we shouted with laughter.

"Any camel," said the Head, "would run a mile at the sight of you."

"And any woman would run a mile at the sight of you," I retorted pleasantly.

We took them off and put them away, and on the ship coming back they served very well as fancy dress costumes. They stood out like sore thumbs, as a matter of fact. But as costumes for a hard desert trip in a matter-of-fact world they were a failure.

Even then, however, the desert trip still remained in abeyance. True, Assour now and then

mentioned it; about three times a day or thereabouts.

"If madams," he would say in his soft Arab voice, "if madams will but sleep one night in the desert, she will be strong as a lions. The desert, it healthy, very healthy, madams."

"It looks healthy," the Head would say, gazing out from the Pyramids or some kindred spot over interminable sand dunes. "But what about us? Will we be healthy?"

And in the meantime kindly friends were advising us not to go. Some of them were quite certain that the Egyptians were intending to rise and drive out the British, and that in the ensuing massacres the Americans would suffer as well. While others told us intriguing stories of various desert fauna.

There was, for instance, the scorpion, an unpleasant insect resembling a crayfish in general outline, and which grasps one with its claws and then brings a stinging tail up over its back and down in front with extremely disagreeable results. The cobra, too, was mentioned, and the sand adder, an interesting viper which buries all but its poisonous horns in the ground, and you do not know it is there until you sit on it.

The net result of which was that we were considering taking a boat up the Nile, when we received an invitation to a party.

"We are camping in the desert three miles from the Pyramids," it said. "And please come out to dinner. Camels will meet you at the corner of Sphinx Avenue and Cheops Street."

Or words to that effect.

So we went. They say that in Abyssinia, where there are no roads for vehicles, Englishmen go to dinner parties in full evening dress on the upper portions of their bodies, and riding breeches and puttes below. Seated at the table they must be rather impressive, but standing——

However, we ourselves affected no such compromise. I wore, among other things, I remember, a pair of white slippers. And then we found no camels waiting, and after taking our motor as far into the desert as the driver would be coaxed, we started to walk. We walked and walked, ever and anon pausing to empty the desert out of our shoes. Down in low valleys, where the sand gave way like fresh wet snow, again climbing ridges in the black dark, slipping back a foot for each foot gained, while time passed and dinner receded. And the Pyramids were just as close as ever. But at last we found the camp, and later on the camels, and with these two discoveries our last doubts faded.

We too would start on such a pilgrimage. Let the scorpions perform their acrobatic feats, let the cobras swell their necks and spit their venom,

let the sand adders bury themselves, all but their horns. We would stand up, if necessary.

But we too would be served by turbaned, bowing Arabs, in tents of green and red and yellow and blue. We too would sit in chairs, and for the clapping of our hands have nautch girls dance and ancient pipers play. We too would rise at dawn to see the desert turn from rose to gold and hear the camels grumble near at hand.

In short, we were going to do the thing, or die trying.

Exactly one week later we were in camp on that identical spot, ready for the next day's move.

CHAPTER III

Now for a number of years it has been our custom to spend a certain portion of the open season under canvas. A part of the upper floor of the garage at home has been taken up in the intervals by great bedding rolls, carefully strapped in their tarpaulin covers, and a certain cedar chest has contained such necessities as wading boots, rubber coats, folding lanterns in which to burn a candle, collapsible canvas basins and what not.

We had hitherto, one perceives, carried with us all the necessities, but none of the luxuries. Food and a camp stove, tin or granite-ware dishes, a minimum of necessary extra clothing packed in a canvas duffle bag, and sufficient tentage to shut out mountain winds and—less effectively—rain, has been the limit of our equipment. A bottle of aspirin, one of iodine, some bandages and adhesive tape have largely constituted our medicine chest, and I well remember the year we encountered an outfit in the mountains which carried with it a folding canvas chair, and the scorn with which we surveyed it.

"If one is going camping," we said among ourselves, "one camps. If one is going to be as luxurious as that, why not stay at home?"

In view of all this, I rather hesitate to describe the way in which we camped in the Libyan desert. It may show a weakening of fiber, a slackening. When I say that instead of one chair we carried eight, and that four of them were steamer chairs——!

Let me, rather, describe a typical day in the desert with the camp at the end of it.

In the morning our breakfast tray has been brought to the sleeping tent, and the other tents have been taken down. The grumbling, snarling male camels which carry the enormous burden of our equipment are being packed, and our gentler and softer-gaited riding animals are kneeling ready for us.

We mount, and Assour on his little gray donkey leads off. Gazelle is this donkey's name, and he has been neatly shorn to a dull white, save where on his legs are left various ornamentations. Thus one fore leg boasts the Pyramids, and one rear one a garter. His footprints in the sand are no larger than a dog's, and from morning to night he carries Assour at a tireless little trot.

He leads the camels. Assour's long legs almost touch the ground, but he manages to convey an air of dignity, even when the wind catches his

cloak and the two together resemble a very small craft carrying an immense head of sail.

Behind him come the two riding camels. Dahabeah and Missouri, with their great soft saddles and stirrups, and their swinging ornaments and harness. And falling in at the last the lumbering pack camels, drooling at the mouth, clumsy and complaining. Enormous beasts, these, and slow, so that before long we have left them behind and are swinging along side by side, our camel boys plodding at the rear.

By noon we are very weary. The camels begin to drag along at two and one half miles an hour; and now and then, by kicking them and hissing through our teeth, we rouse them to a bit of a trot, and Smedi and Abdul Baggi lope behind, their bare feet slipping and sliding in the sand. The motion has become fairly intolerable. Forward and back, side to side, up and down, there are six different and distinct jerks, twists and contortions for every four feet of advance we make.

The Head rouses from a sort of lethargy of discomfort.

"Now I know how they train the nautch girls," he says. "They put 'em on camels."

Were it not a matter of pride, I would trade with Assour, on Gazelle. The little white donkey trots along, its back as level as a floor. It is the

test of a good donkey that one be able to drink a cup of Turkish coffee while he trots, without spilling it.

But I have set out to ride a camel and I will not weaken.

At noon we halt. Sometimes we have found a rock; again it is only a cup-shaped depression in the sand, and every small breeze sets up a tiny sand storm and fills our food with grit. The Bedouins eat, and then covering their heads from the wind, lie out in the sun and sleep. The Head dozes, and I sit and watch some desert beetle digging out a home.

He is working frantically with his forelegs, and as the sand moves back, his rear feet catch it and throw it further still. There is a colony of them, and all about appear these mysterious, geyser-like eruptions of sand.

The camels are squatted in the sand, a rope around their doubled knees. They cannot move, except now and then to lower their heads and scratch the under parts of their long sensitive necks on the ground. Their eyes half-closed, they too doze and rest.

Old training asserts itself and I want to clean up the camp before leaving. But Assour prevents it. He rolls up the bits of bread and meat and leaves them by the wayside.

"Somebody he come along," he says. "Maybe hungry. We leave this, eh?"

And of course we leave it. The food for the hungry, in this empty desert land, and the tin cans to serve who knows what use, where in the remote places almost all the tin-ware is made of American tin cans, and where a Standard oil can is a priceless treasure.

Perhaps we are still close to the Nile, on this specimen day of ours. Then luncheon may be curtailed a trifle, and the siesta also, and Assour will come to us with the light of determination in his eyes.

"We go on now, please," he will say. "We see very fine tomb today."

"Not another tomb, Assour!" I plead.

"Very fine tomb," he says firmly. "Easy. No walking. Just go in, see, come out again."

And of course we see the tomb, or tombs. Assour has a mania for them; we stoop and slide and crawl down into strange and often beautiful depths, and gaze by the light of burning magnesium wire, which usually goes out just as our eyes grow accustomed to the glare; and then we climb and pant and struggle out again.

"Now, was it fine tomb, madams?" Assour demands, with the light of his mania in his eyes. "You like it?"

"It was a grand tomb, Assour," I say feebly, and drop onto a rock for a rest.

But ah me, how easy it is now to understand the deep significance of a "rock in a weary land." Blazing sun and bitter wind, and never a tree for shade. And then the rock, and rest; shadow and shelter. A rock in a weary land.

What are the Pyramids but that? The sublimation of the rock, of shadow and shelter. The very Sphinx is but a rock, carved into a god to face the rising sun. . . .

The day wears on.

The camel saddle has a high horn, front and back, and the Head has been riding a bit too far to the rear. He asks me if I see any smoke arising from the point of contact there, and later on wedges a pillow against the rear horn. When I have kicked and hissed Dahabeah into a trot, Abdul Baggi, my camel boy, sometimes holds to her tail as she goes. She resents this by a dark muttering, but eventually submits.

I drive Dahabeah. She has a chain around her long and slightly aquiline nose, and from this depends a single rough hair rope. When I want her to go to the right I pull her head that way, upon which she goes where she wants to. The same is true of going to the left.

But when Abdul Baggi wants her to do anything he waves a stick and talks to her in low but

violent tones, saying awful things which she quite understands. She talks back, often, and it becomes a dialogue. The fact is that I treat her like a lady; he treats her like a strumpet. But it is him she loves, not me.

We are not talkative, and Assour begins to fear for the success of the expedition. He makes a little conversation.

"You know what Missouri mean in English?" he inquires.

We wait for an explanation.

"It mean 'show me.' In English Missouri's name it 'show me.' "

We nod gravely, and I take my foot out of the left stirrup and try crossing both legs over the camel's neck. Not an easy matter this, for I have by now abandoned breeches and boots, and am riding in a suit which was the pride of my New York tailor's heart before I sailed.

"It is very good," he had said, standing back and gazing at it. "The expression of the skirt, it is right, madame."

But if I am any judge of the expression of a skirt, it is at this moment both shocked and pained.

Eddies of air catch the sand and produce tiny local sand storms, columns like water spouts that rise a hundred feet or so and then move majestically along. We meet a half dozen Bedouins,

driving camels to sell at some village market on the Nile, and eye them with suspicion. But they are unarmed; they are not allowed weapons, and all they carry is their long wooden staves.

"Saïda," we say, as we pass. And gravely and decorously they reply: "Saïda."

Their camels swing slowly along, with a curious effect of slanting forward, for a camel makes up for the distance he projects to the front by the suddenness with which he drops off to the rear. He has no haunches; where the saddle ends so does he. It is a dizzy matter to look back and down while in the saddle, for there is nothing there.

But now Assour begins to promise us the camp. Over each rise we watch, into each valley we peer. And at last we see it. Three white tents, set with their backs to some ridge of sand, still perhaps a long way off, but offering tea and rest, and something to sit on which has not six motions all at one and the same time.

Camp.

CHAPTER IV

I AM just a trifle ashamed of the luxury of those camps of ours, and our enjoyment of them. Sleeping on the ground this last summer in Montana, where I had gone to "ride the circle" on a cow and calf round-up, I found old Mother Earth just a bit harder than I had remembered her. Is it that the years are moving on? Or is the luxury of yesterday the necessity of today?

I told some of those cowboys of our iron beds, with springs and mattresses, of our tables and washstands, our eight chairs and our Oriental rugs, and they were extremely impressed.

"How much does a camel pack?" they asked. And I airily told them a thousand pounds. But I am not sure of this; I only know that when one of them had ceased to rumble like distant thunder and began a pitiful sort of squeal, the Arabs would callously go on loading. And the wretched beast, the rope finally unloosed from its doubled knees as its knelt, would stagger to its feet and take a tentative step or two.

If it did not collapse, then the load was all right.

One of the earliest experiences of the trip was

with a luggage camel, as we prepared to leave our first camp. It was a great gray beast, and when the pack saddle had been adjusted it gave a snort of defiance, broke its ropes and started for home. The last vision we had of it as it ran was as it topped a sand dune at forty miles an hour, its pack straps flying, while all ten of the men picked up their long skirts and raced after it.

They found it in the Arab village four miles away, whimpering against a mud wall, and beat it well and brought it back. But somehow I never could think of that flight as funny; it was despairing, tragic.

On this rebel and three other camels, then, our camp was carried. Three large circular tents were our shelters, erected umbrella-fashion on great center poles, each pole carried in two sections; the tops were extended by ropes fastened to stakes driven into the sand, and the side walls were then hung from the tops.

Set in a row on the desert, the first one was always the cook tent. In it sat the boxes and panniers which carried our supplies and the charcoal stove on which Mohammed, the cook, produced his seven-course dinners. That stove in itself was a masterpiece of simplicity. It consisted merely of an iron trough on legs. The bottom of the trough was filled with small holes like a sieve, for air, and on its bed of burning

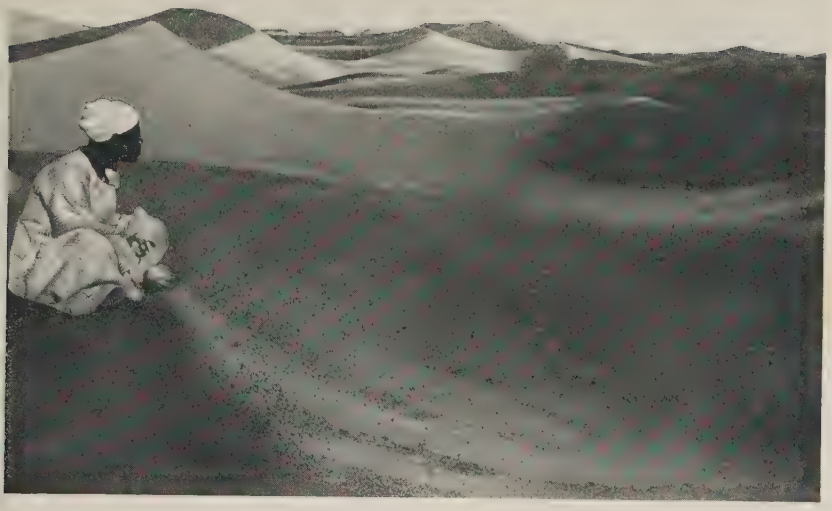
charcoal Mohammed set out his pots and kettles in a row, a battered but savory procession which flaunted its rich and odorous jets of steam like banners.

Next the dining tent.

No ordinary tent this, but one of the finest specimens of the tent-maker's art. It had been made in the Street of the Tent-Makers in Cairo, where all day long men sit cross-legged on the earthen floors of their workrooms, their hands calloused from the heavy canvas, cutting out designs in vivid colors and sewing them to the thick cream-colored base.

Here was Cleopatra, in red and blue, reclining on a yellow barge upon a bright green Nile; here was Seti I as a youth, in a rose skirt and not much more, except the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt; here were slaves in golden yellow collars, and Sphinxes and camels, pyramids and donkeys, and gods with the heads of beasts and sacred bulls—all in strong and primitive colors. And all sewed with millions of stitches to make our tent a gorgeous thing, and to bring into the desert the color it so badly lacks.

No wonder the Bedouin loves color, and puts it in his dress. No wonder the rugs of the desert dwellers are studies in color rather than in design. For the desert has no color, save in the sky at sunset. Then there comes an hour when



ASSOUR AND THE ASTRONOMY LESSON

Photograph by Dr. S. M. Rinehart

TEA IN MY BEDROOM SLIPPERS

THE SAME DITCH SERVES FOR BATHING AND FOR DRINKING

rose gilds the tips of the rolling dunes, and violet shadows rise in the valleys, but all too soon they are gone. For an hour, or less, the desert borrows the finery of the sunset and glows in borrowed raiment. Then night falls, and it is like an Arab woman, clad in soft and trailing black.

So—our dining tent.

As we rode into the camp after our roundabout day Abou Taleb, the waiter, would be standing there, ready to serve us our tea. A red tarbush, a long white gown held in with a bright red belt, and red slippers, that was Abou Taleb. No stockings, for Abou Taleb was really happiest when his bare feet were on the warm sand. All day long he marched afoot with the caravan, his slippers packed carefully away. But at five o'clock, ready to serve tea, he put them on again.

They were, in a way, his livery.

But we are not through with the dining tent.

Inside there would be a table. A real table, already laid for dinner, with a white cloth, napkins, glassware, china and silver. Even two tall brass candle-sticks with candles! The sand was covered with Oriental rugs, and at one side of the tent inside the door was Abou Taleb's serving table. On it already were his extra plates, the dinner wine, Scotch and soda, nuts, raisins and candies!

It was at this point in my narrative that those

cowboys in the Montana mountains began to stir uneasily on the ground. They had swallowed the tents and the rugs, but they stuck at the candy.

"And you packed all that stuff in?"

"We did indeed."

"Hi, dad!" they called to the cook. "You come here and *learn* something."

Usually, however, we arrived too early for dinner. The camels would kneel, we would slide off them stiffly, take our respective sunburns and our weary bodies to the bedroom tent, and Mohammed would boil the water for our tea.

CHAPTER V

THE bedroom tent was equally large and circular, and quite ten feet high in the center, where the large pole rose like a mast to support it. It too was floored with Oriental rugs, and it contained two iron beds with springs, mattresses, pillows, sheets, blankets and white counterpanes. Chairs, a large washstand with two white bowls and two pitchers, a cake of French soap and towels completed our furnishing there.

Shades of those good old days in our western mountains, where a birch-bough bed was the acme of luxury, and the wash basin was a quiet pool in some rocky stream! Where one's teeth ached for an hour after brushing them in the icy water, and one's bath was a struggle between the desire for cleanliness and sheer endurance; when the soap, caught in the current, was whisked away and only discreetly to be pursued beyond the shelter of the bushes; and when the towel casually thrown on the ground came up covered with pine needles and other prickly substances.

For we also had a bath.

Intimation that a bath was required was

followed by the introduction into the tent of a broad but shallow canvas tub, and of Assour's face, smiling and triumphant.

"You see, madams!" he said, on that first bath morning. "I have told you, eh? You ask for bath: I give you bath!"

One could have had that tub filled, no doubt, and splashed away to his heart's content. But we did not. Already we had learned the value of water in the desert.

Our drinking water we carried with us in cases, bottled. But the cooking and wash water were carried in *fanatis,* long and sturdy metal tanks with a faucet, and these *fanatis* had to be replenished every day. At the beginning when we were never far from the canals which are fed by the Nile, this was easy, but later on the distance to be traveled every night in the search for water and grass was considerably increased.

After trekking all day afoot in the hot sand, with the arrival at the camp site the camel boys would unload their camels and start off again. Often the distances they covered before they ate their evening meal were equal to what we had made during the entire day. And they had not only to fill the *fanatis* and buy grass for the camels; they bought the grass as it stood in the field and then painfully cut it with small curved knives.

They filled great panniers with it, and late in the evening they would return, indomitably cheerful, singing their queer Arab songs, to tie their camels as they reclined on the ground, to heap in front of each a pile of fodder as high as itself, to eat a bit of belated supper, to gather the dry desert bush and maybe a bit of camel dung, and while I was sitting wrapped in blankets in a steamer chair, to gather around their bit of fire in their thin cotton clothes and sing again.

Where the fire had warmed the sand they slept, to be up at the first glow of the chilly dawn, and at work.

Never once did I hear a complaint, or see an indication of discontent.

"Are you all right?" I would ask.

And they would say:

"May Allah watch over you and give you good health and happiness! We are satisfied."

After dinner, in the evenings, Assour would enter the dining tent with a bow, and ask us if all had been to our taste. And Abou Taleb would stand by listening in painful anxiety, until we had praised the meal and the service. There was great uneasiness when we insisted on cutting the seven courses to five.

"You do not eat," said Abou Taleb mournfully, "Mohammed, he cry in his tent. He do not cook good enough."

But we stuck to our five courses: a delicious soup; fish when near the Nile, and an entrée when we left it, a roast of chicken or of mutton usually; a salad with quail or squab, and a pudding or soufflé. But nothing could induce them to shorten the end of the meal; fruits, nuts, raisins and candy must be passed. Aye, and eaten, or distress showed in Abou Taleb's dark face and the songs outside the cook tent died. The Americans were not happy; they were not well. They did not eat!

So we would eat, and then stagger out, filled to repletion, to our steamer chairs set in the sand. And then Abou Taleb would bring our coffee, Turkish coffee, hot and strong and sweet in its tiny brass coffee pot. And we would sip it out of little cups, and nibble Turkish delight—or drop it into the sand and bury it stealthily, to hurt nobody's feelings—and yawn and yawn and yawn.

All would be silent, save for the bark and occasional shriek of a jackal, and the steady quiet munching of the camels, behind their heaps of grass. They would eat all night, until every blade was gone and all their six times seven stomachs were filled.

But sometimes we played cards.

"You like learn old Arab card game?" Assour asked one night.

"We'll try anything once, Assour," we said.

So we went into the dining tent and Assour got out the cards. "Very exciting game," he said. "Some people play for much money, but I do not. I am a holy man." By which he meant, I think, a religious one. Do I not remember those first days of Ramadan, when the good Mohammedan does not eat nor drink from before dawn until after sunset? And Assour, poor dear lad, trying not even to swallow his spittle, and politely and clandestinely expectorating behind my back?

The game was Basra, and it was some time before we could become accustomed to dealing from the right to left instead of from left to right. They do so many things wrong, from our point of view; pull a saw instead of pushing it, read of course from right to left, and even run their horse races in reverse.

But as Assour taught us this old and exciting Arab game, the truth began to dawn on us. Basra was nothing other than the casino of our childhood days. With only one variation: Assour would unblushingly cheat if he got the chance, and be entirely unashamed if he were caught at it.

But mostly we would just sit and let the peace of the desert soak into our tired minds and bodies. And perhaps Smeda would come then and sit on his heels near us on the sand, without speech or movement. Then I would say:

"Won't you sing a little, Smeda?"

And he would sing. Thin, incredibly mournful, always minor, without phrasing or harmony as we know it, it yet fitted the time and place. For Smeda's song was of his love for this, his desert, and of his joy in coming back to it again. Now and then the others would join in, their shawled and turbaned heads uplifted; and Abou Taleb, melting the ends of candles out of their brass sticks at Mohammed's charcoal fire, would throw small and temporary spotlights of burning wax over this quaint and lowly chorus.

Then, in the night wind, on the gaudy walls of the dining tent Cleopatra's barge would rise and fall on its green Nile; the canvases of the steamer chairs would snap in their frames; the camels, still saddled against the cold, would lie with their long necks outstretched along the desert sand, resting, and Mohammed would put away the feathered fan with which he blew his fire. The stars shining brightly overhead, perhaps the Head would continue Assour's lessons in primitive astronomy, with an apple for the earth, an orange for the sun, and a walnut for the moon.

"Now," he would begin briskly, "what is it, Assour, that makes the moon small, sometimes a crescent, as it is tonight, and again large and round?"

"Allah," Assour would state, promptly and devoutly.

Of such simple joys were our evenings compounded.

I would go into my tent, where two candles on a chair beside my bed provided my reading light. But long after I had settled down I could hear the astronomy lesson going on outside and Assour's voice.

"A Muezzin"—a priest—"has tell me," he would say, "that by the Koran an ox uphold the earth on his horn. But perhaps he not know," he would add politely.

And then the Head's voice again, and finally Assour's, still polite, but slightly plaintive.

"I see, sair," he would be saying. He always said "sair" to the Head. "But then what is on the top? The very top, where the stars end?"

CHAPTER VI

So far what has been told has been largely the *mise en scène* of the camping trip in the Libyan desert; of our camels, our tents and our men. But to end there would be like describing the train in which one travels through strange and foreign lands.

Yet this narrative must be one of small if quaint experiences. No great adventure befell us. In spite of the warnings, to take a guard with us, we carried none. Nor even a weapon, save an antiquated shotgun belonging to Assour, a blunderbuss of deadly recoil and a barrel so dirty that to fire it was an experiment of extreme uncertainty. But the Bedouins who met us in the desert passed us with a civil greeting. Indeed, the only time we were in physical danger the quarrel did not concern us at all, and we simply found ourselves in the usual position of innocent bystanders in a fracas. And the rioters were not desert dwellers at all, but *fellahin,* or farmers.

To begin with, then, we established our first camp in the desert three miles from the Pyramids. There we spent our first day and our first night; across the river lay Cairo, and on the hill beyond

it the citadel and the great Mosque of Mohammed Ali, with its huge rounded dome and its minarets. From our position high on the sand dunes we would see also the great quarries whence came the stone for the Pyramids. And so clear was the air that the Pyramids themselves seemed but a stone's throw away.

We could even see the white-clad figure of the man who makes a living by climbing to the top of the Great Pyramid and back to the ground in six minutes! A predecessor of his did the same thing, but one day his foot slipped, and he crashed to the bottom.

"He was all broke to pieces, madams," Assour tells me. "He was like a jelly."

One pays this man a certain amount to carry out his contract; if he fails, nothing is owing. But I hoped, as I sat there, that the group of Americans below would pay him anyhow. Probably they would have done so, but he made it. We held a watch on him.

On the top of the Great Pyramid is a flat area about twenty feet each way, taken off like the smooth casing, for building material long ago. And on this small and windy spot there sits all day an old Arab, who brews coffee for those who make the climb. At least I am told it is coffee. I have heard an ardent dispute among those who have sampled it, some maintaining that it is tea.

He could be seen now and then from our camp, a microscopic figure, like some small god atop a mighty altar. He makes a few piasters a day, this old man, for his climb and his descent, and for those long hours of loneliness in cold, in wind and in boiling heat.

Napoleon is said to have told his soldiers beneath the Pyramids that twenty centuries looked down upon them. But Napoleon was no archeologist, and this old man on top of the Great Pyramid looks down, not on twenty, but on fifty centuries.

There is a type of tourist which professes disappointment in the Pyramids. For such people there is no hope. Ruskin said, looking at the pillars of Karnak: "At last size tells." But the temple of Karnak seems to me to be a pigmy undertaking compared with the Great Pyramid. It was not difficult, from the commanding position of that first camp of ours, to reconstruct the making of this miracle; the great barges bringing their loads of limestone blocks from the quarry far across the river in the eastern hills, and waiting for the annual inundation to bring them close to the chosen site. Three hundred thousand blocks, each weighing an average of two and a half tons, were thus brought over; and the labor of a hundred thousand men for twenty years was required for the whole project.

It took ten years, according to Herodotus, merely to build the great stone ramp or causeway up which these blocks were dragged to the plateau where the Great Pyramid stands. It covers at its base thirteen acres of desert land.

And all of this by man power! It necessitated the building of a mountain of sand as well, for as the monument grew so also grew the ramps of sand up which the great blocks were dragged. Naked in the blazing heat of the Egyptian summer, shivering in the damp and cold of winter, a city of a hundred thousand laborers and slaves starved, bled and died in their rope harness, that one royal body might lie secure.

But there is a legend that Khufu did not lie so safely after all, that after his death and burial the slaves revolted and at night broke in and took the body away.

"They cut it into thirteen pieces, madams," Assour asserted, "and buried the pieces here and there in the sand. His queen, she find all but the head, but that she not find."

One rather hopes that the legend is true. There should be some punishment for a crime like this, and the Great Pyramid is not only the one surviving marvel of the Seven Wonders of the world; it is the enduring evidence of a great wickedness.

CHAPTER VII

During that first day we made small preliminary excursions on our camels, grew accustomed to our chairs settling into the sand when we sat down in them, surveyed from the top of our sand dune the Arab village below the plateau, wondered if the dogs barked all night as well as all day—which they did—and that night *we* gave a party.

Such preparations as were made! A pole with a large gasoline lamp, set up to guide our guests and later on for the entertainment which followed; rugs on the sand beneath it, for the same purpose; an extra cook from Cairo, for were we not to have nine courses at dinner? And food in such quantities as were to show our wealth and importance to our guests, for Assour was arranging the party, and was determined to shine in our reflected glory.

During the day, with the preparations for the feast our establishment began gradually to enlarge itself. Came a woman with two children from somewhere or other, and set to work peeling potatoes; came a patriarchal old gentleman with a beard, who seated himself in the shadow of the

cook tent and only moved when our feast was over and the men were about to fall to. Came donkey boys and camel boys with supplies, to tie up their animals and wait until the dinner hour. Came over the sand shortly after noon the galli-galli man, engaged for nine P.M., followed by his piper, also to be in good time for the meal.

And later on, when darkness had fallen and our gasoline lamp shone like a moon over the desert, came our guests on camels each led by a cloaked and turbaned figure which also joined the silent expectant circle just behind the cook tent.

A strange thing it was thus to wait for our guests; to see Abou Taleb, whose religion forbids unnecessary killing, carefully carrying strange huge insects out of the dining tent, where on release they immediately flew back again! To see Assour, busy and efficient, assuring our uninvited guests of our wealth, our hospitality, and the plenteous quantity of the meal they soon would have.

"They are fine peoples," he said, with a gesture. "They pay for everything. They wish everyone to have plenty." This in English, for our benefit. Who, after that, could have shown a niggardly spirit? And again:

"I have tell the camel boys that you will pay them, sair," he said to the Head. "Bakshish, also.

Nobody can pay anything tonight, but you and the madams. Is it not so?"

"Indeed, it appears to be so," said the Head.

A period of waiting. The piper blew on his gourdlike pipe, three notes or so, over and over. There was a faint and somewhat premature odor of Scotch from behind the cook tent, where the wines and liquors were stored, but withal a grave decorum. And then out of the darkness came a distant swinging lamp, and the soft pad of the first camel's feet.

In they came; brilliant saddle cloths, necklaces and tassels shone in the artificial moonlight. The camels knelt and the guests slid off. It had been an eerie affair, that three-mile ride through the darkness on the great beasts, led by strange unseen and shrouded figures. But now they were here, with their escorts. The officials each had brought a *kavass,* gorgeous in gold-laced uniform; the tourists had their dragomen. The circle behind the cook tent was still further enlarged, and Assour's eyes fairly snapped. This *was* a party. There was plenty for all. I questioned him anxiously, but he smiled, showing his white and perfect teeth.

"Plenty, madams," he said. "Tonight no one he go hungry. If more come, there is still enough."

And, I rather fancy, more did come. But the

THIS IS NOT THE WAY I MEANT TO LOOK ON A CAMEL

THE WATER-WHEEL

THEIR SMALL FIRES WARMED THE SAND ON WHICH THEY SLEPT

utmost decorum obtained. Not a sound entered the dining tent from outside during that long and elaborate meal, save now and then the piper's three plaintive notes as he played outside in the sand. Nor even later, when the feast had passed on, was there any confusion. Somewhere, beyond the lamp light, our unseen guests sat about their food, eating it Arab fashion with their hands. And I hope—and believe—that Assour was right, and that that one night no one there went hungry. But until the galli-galli man began his curious cry, they remained dim shadows, ghosts of desert people, eating in the sand.

Who can describe the conjuror? Is it not a part of his mystery that he remains beyond description? How can I convey to you that I saw the American consul throw the Head's sapphire ring out far into the desert, and that later I took it out of the center of an uncut orange? Who can explain the amazement of that impeccable young Englishman when, as he sat in his chair with his cup of Turkish coffee in his hand, two extremely new chickens suddenly emerged from the neck of his dinner coat? A snake was found where it had no business to be. The galli-galli man ate fire and blew flames out of his mouth. Wonders of all sorts took place to the piper's music. And slowly out of the darkness came our uninvited guests, picturesque and ragged, to form

a circle of delight behind us, and later on, at our invitation, to dance: those odd men's dances of the desert, where a stick now takes the place of the gun, where each improvises his own stiff-kneed steps as he goes, and yet where some fundamental and to us unknown law of the dance yet rigidly obtains.

Thus our first evening in the desert. The gasoline lamp was still burning when we went to bed, and the dogs in Mena village were still barking.

My last waking words were to the Head, who was propped up in bed doing a cross-word puzzle.

"Well," I said, "if food will do it we ought to get strong as a lions!"

"I daresay," he replied absently. "And we're leaving Mena village in good shape, too. What's the name of an island in the Lesser Antilles?"

CHAPTER VIII

We started the next morning, Gazelle and Assour leading, then the saddle camels and after that the pack animals. Our dromedaries, however, soon outdistanced the rest and as I looked back the last thing I saw in the blazing sunlight was Abou Taleb, white gown, red fez, red belt and bare of foot, trudging valiantly ahead of the caravan, carrying a forgotten coat hanger in one hand and a large iron lantern in the other.

We had left behind us the huge monuments of the great Fourth Dynasty kings, and were facing toward the south and the lesser pyramids at Abousir and Sakkara.

Lesser, indeed; made of inferior limestone, their cores a mass of rubble and sand, they show as plainly as written history the lessening power of the Pharaohs. No longer could a king summon a hundred thousand slaves for twenty years to build him a monument; a powerful feudal nobility was arising to dispute his hitherto unquestioned sway. The old cycle of empire, so often repeated, was beginning again; the abuse of power, and the rise of the people to contest it.

But how long, long ago! King Tut-ank-amen

was not to be born for another thousand years or more, yet already the mud of the Nile delta had covered a civilization infinitely older. It is known that six thousand years ago these delta astronomers had already divided the year into 365 days; twelve months of thirty calendar days each and five feast days at the end. And that they possessed even at that time some form of writing, its nature now unknown.

Five thousand years ago, long before the Pyramids were built, and we find these people dressed in linen cloth, with sandals; wearing ornaments and rings, the women painting their faces and dressing their hair with ivory combs; making fine vessels of clay and of stone, and later on of copper; building boats, some of them with sails, and carrying standards or flags; using flint knives with gold handles; eating with carved ivory spoons.

More than two thousand years before the time of Tut-ank-amen, they were building great palaces for their kings and mansions for their nobles, furnished with beds, chairs, stools and chests, of cedar inlaid with ivory, or other precious woods. Rich vessels of alabaster, rock crystal, copper, silver and gold ornamented these houses, and the floors were covered with heavy rugs.

They were wearing a linen so fine that the fibers resembled silk; they were making gold

jewelry of beauty and extreme delicacy, and with insets of precious stones, mostly amethyst and turquoise. The rich built gardens around their houses, and in them were artificial ponds, or lakes. And in these pleasure gardens they played at draughts, or the women danced to the music of the harp, the pipe and the lute.

A mass of servants and slaves attended on the wealthy. Their food was elaborate and carefully prepared. They ate meat and poultry, bread, cakes, fruit and sweets. They made and drank various sorts of beers and wines; they hunted the lion, the hippopotamus and the crocodile for pleasure, and in their households they had vast harems, with one legal wife and many concubines.

That their civilization was already beginning, after the manner of civilizations, to clutter itself, is shown by Breasted: "Although the royal toilet was comparatively simple, yet a small army of ring-makers, sandal-makers, perfumers, launderers, bleachers, and guardians of the royal wardrobe now filled the king's palace." But public work was not neglected; mining was carried on extensively with tools of copper, never of iron. And up and down the Nile traveled vast flotillas of boats carrying the commerce of the nation. Brickyards made in quantities the sun-dried mud bricks with which most of the houses were built;

leather was cured and tanned, and textiles were woven.

For the old system of barter there was being substituted a form of currency, in the form of rings of copper and of gold. And the discovery of papyrus-paper displaced the heavy and unwieldy clay tablets; with the use of this papyrus-paper came the earliest writing, as we know it, displacing the elaborate hieroglyphic of earlier times.

Strange to think, as we moved along sedately on our camels, that much of this ancient civilization was still buried deep under the encroaching sands, beneath our very feet. Now and then some happy accident or painful exploration brings a bit of it to light. We saw here and there a camp of the searchers, tired sunburned men, showing the strain of long effort and of trying living conditions. But mostly it was desert, with perhaps the black tents of Bedouins under the lee of a sand dune, their camels hobbled, or free to graze where they could find a bit of sun-dried grass.

Along the Nile below and to our left were only fields, date gardens, and here and there a mud village, hardly to be distinguished from the newly plowed land about it. On the raised paths, high enough to be above the river at the time of its rise, moved no longer any gorgeous panoply of

master and slaves, of women in transparent linen, through which showed the lines of their bare and scented bodies, of curtained palanquins or hunters armed with lances and with bows.

Instead, only bent and ragged husbandmen, women in untidy trailing black, and a procession of farm animals, camels, water buffalo and donkeys. Here and there a water wheel shrieked as it was drawn around by a bullock, the cessation of its weird squealing a warning signal that the animal had stopped; heavy water buffalo dragged the ancient plows through the rich soil, and even now and then a camel was superciliously laboring. Long-legged men rode on tiny donkeys, their elbows flapping, their feet almost touching the ground. The wind blew out their abas, or cloaks, so that like Assour they resembled small boats carrying enormous sails.

But of the glory of Egypt that was, so long ago, there remained only the Pyramids behind us and the lesser ones ahead.

CHAPTER IX

Abou Taleb, with his lantern and coat hanger, had disappeared with the pack camels. The heat was terrible. The bottle of Evian water in the saddle bag under my left foot had taken on the temperature of the stomach of the camel against which it had been resting. To stop was to burn. And then—we had to stop.

In an unguarded moment we had agreed to have a photographer from the Pyramids take our pictures, caravan and all. And half way to Sakkara in the mid-day heat we topped a rise and found him waiting for us! All set up in the desert sand, black cloth over camera, his camel kneeling and tied, he brought us back from ancient Egypt with a jerk. There we sat, waiting for the pack camels and the men to come up. And it took considerable self-control to keep me from hissing like a tea-kettle.

Maybe he earned his seven English pounds; I daresay he did. But my vision of our being taken in silhouette along the top of a dune, moving picture fashion, died in the first few minutes. My other and earlier vision of being a veiled and

mysterious figure had died long ago. But it was now that I learned why Assour and Smeda carried always their small rattan sticks.

One of the camel men moving at a critical moment, Smeda soundly beat him! He bore no ill-will, either then or later on, but it was a strange and painful experience. Later on we were to recognize that this beating was not so much a punishment as an assertion of authority, but it required considerable readjustment of ideas on our part.

On and on. A Bedouin encampment, in from the desert to sell camels; low black tents, open in front and untidy beyond words, for the desert Bedouin has no sense of order; he unpacks his camels and lets the stuff fall where it may. Dirty, slatternly, delicately featured women with beautiful slender bodies, barefooted, tattooed with blue on the chin and wearing many bracelets, and a ring in the right nostril. Tall and bearded men.

They were very friendly; they came to my camel and offered me to shake hands that had not been washed in months. They brought up their children to show, beautiful children, so dirty that I did not dare to touch them. And when we divided among them the equivalent of a dollar and a half in our money, their gratitude was amazing.

They were intensely interested in my clothing, examining it carefully. And as the "expression"

of my skirt was by that time about as bad as it could be, owing to being hooked up over a ten-inch saddle horn, I do not yet know whether their interest was admiration or the reverse.

One wonders about these desert dwellers. How do they thrive as they do, on a diet almost exclusively of camel's milk and cheese? So short of water that the women, at least in the Arabian desert, frequently wash their hair in camel's urine; their clothing mostly ragged cotton against the winter winds; their fuel dried camel dung, when they use fuel at all; their bed an ancient blanket or rug, their tents open to the air, and their entire wealth in camels, sheep and goats which they must move constantly, in search of desert grass and water.

It is liberty, rather than the call of the desert, perhaps, which holds them there. They love the desert, but it is its freedom, not its privations, that holds them. They look down with a lofty contempt on those Arabs who have degenerated into town dwellers, and suffer their own constant hardships with pride.

They are brave, handsome, dishonest, and dirty. Yet the tradition of the Sheik as a passionate and romantic figure somehow persists. The Head, who in his lyric moments has been apt to warble: "From the desert I come to thee," took one good look at this Bedouin encampment and has not

since offered to arrive on his Arab shod with fire!

To those impressionable women on the terrace of Shepheard's hotel, gazing with romantic eyes from their matter-of-fact husbands to the picturesque dragomen on the pavement below, I strongly suggest that they visit the Sheik in his native habitat.

Mohammed or Ali or Abdul may be of Bedouin blood—almost always is, in fact—but he is a town dweller. His beautiful garments are a part of his stock in trade. From his soft, tight-wrapped turban to his long under-slip of striped silk or satin, and the loose cloak of gold or blue or mulberry broadcloth over it, he is a product of the city bazaars. He is as deliberately got up for the part as the corral outfit on a dude ranch. And on holidays you may happen on him in a ready-made sack suit, a tarbush and a pair of American tan shoes!

We left our Bedouins and went on. Incredibly slow going. A camel walks about two and a half miles an hour, and to look back was discouraging. The Great Pyramid continued to look about as close as ever, and Sakkara as far away.

But as Sakkara gradually drew nearer Assour became happier. Here were to be more tombs, and tombs were his food and drink.

"Fellow must belong to the ground-hog family,"

the Head grumbled. "He isn't happy unless he's scrambling into the earth or crawling out again."

And true to type, we had no more than had our luncheon on the porch of Marriette's house than Assour appeared with a coil of magnesium wire, and indicated that it was time to go underground.

It was too bad to have to leave. The tombs of the bulls and the great Step Pyramid were bringing a long line of excursionists from a river boat on the Nile. They came in their dozens; elderly gentlemen holding with long-forgotten knee grips to the ribs of fractious little donkeys; large overfed women in tight skirts, astride their animals and extremely conscious of a length of uncovered stocking and even something more; priests in queer flat hats, cassocks and long beards. Some merely curious, some pathetically seeking understanding and the culture travel is supposed to bring, and some frankly out for a lark and not particularly having it.

They sank in the deep sand; they ate their cold basket lunches on the porch. And finally, hot and perspiring, they slid down the inclined way into the great Serapeum, and were somehow coordinated and silenced by its majestic strangeness.

Originally sun worshippers, gradually the state religion of Egypt had become largely a mystic one. Thus, a sacred beetle carved from stone, the *scarab* of today, was laid upon the heart of the

dead, under the mummy wrappings. This beetle was inscribed with a charm: "Oh my heart, rise not up against me as a witness."

But with all the vast cost in taxes on the common people of an extravagant religion and priesthood, the poor man never had a place in their magnificence. Not for him the great temple festivals, nor even the mighty gods of the rich.

He might not even enter the temples, but remained outside the gates, worshipping the lower demi-gods. Humble gods, which he could understand, and who perhaps might understand him.

There had been, from the very earliest times however, a cult of the bull. At Memphis, during the height of his apotheosis, he was worshipped in a temple and housed in a palace. "He lay on a soft couch behind a costly curtain; was fed on a broth of wheat flour and pearl water, with milk and honey cakes. A harem of cows was kept for him in an adjoining building."

So he lived, an oracle whose verdict was favorable if he ate the food offered him and adverse if he did not, and one fancies that an attack of indigestion on his part must have thrown the entire community into black despair.

It was under his temple with its great avenue of sphinxes, some of them now seventy feet beneath the desert sand, that his priests and devotees built the crypt which was to house the

sacred and embalmed remains after death. Today the temple is gone, but the mausoleum remains.

And into this mausoleum, sliding and slipping, did Assour lead the way with his magnesium wire. My own personal conviction that the only good bull is a dead bull heightened my interest, and made me wonder why Marriette, who discovered the Serapeum, burst into tears when he saw it.

But gradually the tremendous majesty of the place overcame me. The enormous granite sarcophagi, each in its deep particular crypt; the one still standing in the passageway, its journey unfinished, its progress forever stilled. To what processions and rituals were these great coffins entombed!

The king, with his crown and mace, with guards and standard bearers and slaves with long-handled fans; acolytes with burning flares, slaves to carry the precious burden, funeral pipes and lyres a-playing, and then the priests, in gold and fine linen, haughty, powerful, rich beyond dreams of wealth, reciting some mumble-jumble of incantation and prayer.

The sweating slaves dragged the great sarcophagi on a wooden sledge, in front of which a man poured water to prevent fire from friction. It moved, inch by inch, until finally it was lowered into place. The noise of lamentation and the drums filled and beat about the rocky walls of the

tomb. Ceremonial vessels with grain and water for the next world were carried in. And then the mourning procession turned and went out again, into a world minus one good beef animal and nothing more.

Sixty-five tons each those staunch old caskets weigh. When Marriette discovered the crypt, one tomb still remained sealed, after thirty-seven hundred years. And the sand still bore the imprints of the naked feet of the slaves who had lowered that granite mass into place.

We camped that night three miles back in the desert, with the Step Pyramid to look at for history and the tiny light of the keeper of the Pyramid of Annos for company.

Poor devil, his is a lonely job. He has a hut overlooking the Nile Valley, but he lives in it alone. All around him are tombs. A mis-step after dark, and he can fall down those great shafts dug by the Persians for the burial of their own dead. Modern tombs, these, only twenty-five hundred years old. As modern as Babylon and Nineveh. Assour did not think them worth our attention. But important nevertheless, for the deepest pit is not so deep as that into which old Egypt had by that time fallen.

Her greatness was gone, never to be regained. The Persian had taken her, and if she lived on, it was only later to become the granary of Rome.

CHAPTER X

We camped and rested, and the Head looked for adhesive plaster in his traveling bag. Below and beyond us lay Memphis, but near at hand and before us was the tea table. We lounged in steamer chairs and surveyed the historic prospect with bored and satiated eyes.

"I suppose we have to see Memphis," I said, "but I don't get any particular thrill out of the idea."

Nevertheless, Memphis, or the site of it, furnished us one modern and authentic thrill, and that the very next day.

We had started—let's be honest about this—we had started to buy a drum. One of those quaint Egyptian affairs which you put on the top of the bookcases in the library at home, and when people comment on it, you say:

"Oh, that! We picked it up in Egypt."

Of course we wanted to see, or at least were willing to see, the overthrown and broken statue of Rameses II, that great ruler and megalomaniac. But we also intended to go to the market place at Bedraschein and buy our drum for fifteen piasters, or seventy-five cents. Thus musically

outfitted, our men having only walked all day in desert sand and blistering heat and then set up our camp, would dance for us in the evenings.

So we did all the usual things. Refused imitation scarabs, stood on a shaky platform and looked down at the great fallen statue of a great dead king, and finally started on our camels along the high and narrow dike beside the canal toward market-day at Bedraschein.

About three feet wide was that foot-path, and Dahabeah hated the very sight of water. She was a constant explanation to me of why a camel can do without a drink for seven days, or is it that they have seven stomachs? There is a seven in it somewhere. Even then she shied and fidgeted. And ahead of us a most prodigious racket commenced in the market-place. Dahabeah would have pricked up her ears, had they been prickable. As it was, the shrieks and roars growing louder, she showed every inclination to cut and run. And then, suddenly, things began to happen.

A man shot across the foot-path ahead of us and leaped into the canal. A dozen others followed him, swimming across madly, while out of the market-place and onto our foot-path there began to swarm the accumulated and hysterical people and livestock of a half dozen villages; old men on donkeys frantically beating their beasts,

screaming and pallid women, camels, cows, sheep, children, goats and dogs.

Bedraschein was erupting like a volcano. Terror was in every face, and in the midst of this lava stream of frightened humanity, crowding us to the edge of the ditch, we were caught and held. Impossible to go on, impossible to turn back.

And the situation was growing worse. The sounds of battle had left the market-place and were approaching us. Terrific roars and yells, and the smashing of stick on stick grew nearer. More and more cloaked and turbaned figures dived into the canal. And finally the battle itself emerged onto the foot-path a few feet ahead of us, and resolved itself into a full-sized riot.

What would have happened had it come in our direction I do not know. Personally, I think our entire outfit would have gone into the canal, and from a later experience with Dahabeah and a ditch, that she could quite resignedly have died there. But by some chance of battle the retiring party here gained an advantage and drove the other side back. And an Arab policeman came a-running and firing his revolver, and the rioters were compelled to disperse.

For some time we remained where we were. I cannot speak for the Head and Missouri, but Dahabeah and I were trembling violently. And

long after, as we proceeded on our way, we saw dignified elderly gentlemen sitting in the fields in their under-garments, wringing water out of their clothing and turbans, and examining their wounds. Here and there were family groups by the wayside, the women still crying, the men surly and somewhat damaged.

And all because two small boys of rival villages had got into a fight and their elders had interfered!

But one wonders. Egypt has been a conquered nation for twenty-five hundred years. Always the conquerors have climbed to prosperity over the bent backs of these husbandmen; they have been non-resisters for almost three thousand years, men of peace, accepting their lowly place without complaint, disarmed, subjugated.

But lately a new and militant spirit has been born among them. Its voices go up and down the Nile, calling to them who cannot read or write. And these voices are preaching to them a new doctrine. American born but not American supported; the right of small nations to determine for themselves their form of government.

Will they listen?

CHAPTER XI

One loses count of the days in the desert. It may have been the fourth day, or the fifth, that we encountered the Bedouin wedding.

We had been moving on with our usual extreme deliberation, the only excitement occurring when Missouri was being mounted. It was her custom on those occasions to allow the Head to get one foot into a stirrup and then to leap suddenly into the air, leaving the Head to dangle perilously like Mohammed's coffin, between Heaven and earth.

Dahabeah was better humored. Beyond snarling at the sight of me and occasional attempts to bite my left foot she was amiable enough.

That rather small and delicate feature, my nose, had become quite insensitive to the touch, and gave every indication of being about to shed itself, as a snake sheds its skin. The Head had broken out in a fine rash. At least he called it a rash, but in his heart he suspected fleas. As he had also taken a heavy cold, he alternated between wiping his nose and scratching, and was extremely busy.

Even Assour's dark face had taken on a deeper hue, and Abou Taleb would have been invisible

outside the circle of candle light in the dining tent, without his long white gown.

In the camps, pitched sometimes high on a dune and sometimes low in a hollow of the sand, there was not much variety. Now and again, when the camels had not come back from their trips for water until after nightfall, Smeda would take the old blunderbuss and fire a signal to direct them on their way. And we had had one sand storm, but not a severe one.

I wakened in the night to feel my bed vibrating as the tent wall was pushed against it by the gale, and to hear the men driving in the tent pegs with muffled hammers. But except for a fine coating of sand over and inside of everything the next morning, we had no ill results. Later, on the way to Bagdad, I was to have my front hair neatly sheared off by the flying sand. But that was not yet.

In the main, all was well with us. I had mastered the combination of hiss, kick and prod from behind which would send Dahabeah into a neck-breaking trot, and not to allow my tongue between my teeth at such moments. I had also succeeded at least once in turning her by her single rein, and I had leaped a ditch on her! But this last was without intention, and I claim no merit for it.

We had found a small oasis, watered by desert wells, and unfortunately under process of

irrigation. Before we knew it we were in a field surrounded by running ditches, and so far as the camels were concerned, there we were going to remain.

Again and again, Abdul Baggi behind and I above, we put Dahabeah to that ditch. And she yelled and scolded, turned and backed, but into it she would not go. Then suddenly her hind legs sank beneath me, and I called for help.

"She's lying down!"

But she was not. She was preparing to jump. And jump she did, far and wide. I think she probably holds the record for a standing broad jump, and I was on her!

Outside of these small incidents, however, our progress was slow and unexciting. At the camps food came to us in dignified and mysterious fashion. Out of the night, or the early morning, a quaint patriarchal figure would be seen approaching, staff in hand and voluminous cloak wrapped about it. It would seat itself near the cook tent, and perhaps take coffee. After that and only in due course of time, it would produce from some hidden place fresh eggs, or a live pigeon or two, or perhaps a dozen tiny quail.

Game was always brought alive, and the only way to enjoy one's evening dinner was resolutely to put the morning out of mind. Once the Head came to my tent, with what seemed to be a mother

quail calling loudly under his arm. But it was not; it was the trapper's lure, a bit of stick covered with red calico and fur, and emitting on being squeezed the call of the mother bird. The patriarch who brought it sits in the scrub somewhere, wherever he can find any, and looks as much like a quail as possible. Under his arm is the call, which he can squeeze without moving, and when the baby birds come a-running he throws a net over them.

We paid, I think, two piasters each for them, or ten cents.

When and how the milk came I did not learn, but we were never without it. And as to whether it was cow's milk or not I did not care to inquire, in a country which uses milk from camels, sheep, goats and water buffalo. Whatever its source, it was clean and fresh always for our breakfast tray, with its ham and eggs, or omelet, or crisp bacon, its coffee and its toast.

We were then doing very well. And it was on the fourth or maybe the sixth day that we encountered our Arab wedding.

CHAPTER XII

We had ridden for several hours, when topping a rise in the sand we saw the black tents and the camels of a Bedouin encampment, and observed a general air of excitement and movement about it.

Assour looked and pronounced judgment.

"They make wedding down there," he said. "You like to go, madams?"

"You're sure it's a wedding and not a riot?" I asked nervously, remembering Bedraschein. But Assour smiled and reassured me. So a half hour later we rode into the camp, and so successfully absorbed its interest that the ceremonial entrance of the bride received but scant attention.

Imagine then, a group of low black camels'- or goats'-hair tents, open to the front and all facing in one direction, away from the wind. Imagine no women at all, as they have gone on foot to meet the bridal procession and escort the bride into camp. Imagine, too, all the men newly shaved and in white, with white camels'-hair blankets draped about them, and snowy close-wrapped turbans.

And then imagine a procession approaching. First, a man on a fiery horse, the man in brilliant

dress, wearing an old inlaid sword and flourishing a rifle, and the horse in a purple velvet and gold saddle cloth, and heavy silver-inlaid bridle and saddle. The horse, spurred to fury, curvets, rears, dashes madly ahead and back again, while its rider recklessly fires the gun.

Second: a camel, richly decorated, carrying three black-clad and veiled women, one behind the other, the women relatives of the bride.

Third: A white camel, equally gayly caparisoned, driven by a young boy who sits well forward, and behind him a small and certainly suffocating figure, completely covered head and all by a white blanket, which is the bride.

Fourth: A long procession of women on foot, all in black and with covered faces, singing or lamenting: I haven't an idea which. The entire parade encircles the camp three times—all, that is, but the rider on the Arab horse. He is bargaining with Assour in Arabic for the photograph the Head wants to take, Assour saying five piasters and the ornamental gentleman ten.

"You are no Bedouin," says Assour, contemptuously. "Why are you here? You are only a *fellah.* Five piasters."

"You are the son of a camel," says the ornamental gentleman, recklessly waving his gun. "Ten piasters and be damned to you," or its Oriental equivalent.

The dispute has drawn all the men. We are the center of attention; the bride and her procession move on, unseen. Her camel kneels. She is taken into the bridegroom's tent, where later on they will feast on a camel he has killed. But no one observes her. We pay five piasters, and owing to excitement and the fact that the horse is trying to stampede, succeed in getting the animal's head only, in a blurred outline.

Then we ride away, and leave the bride to enjoy what is left of her great day.

It was only on the way to camp that I suddenly remembered something, and inquired of Assour.

"Which of those men was the bridegroom?"

"He not there," Assour replied promptly. "He shamed; he sit in desert all today."

"Good gracious! When does he come back?"

It appeared that he would return after nightfall, and entering his tent, where his bride sat surrounded by the women of the encampment, would there see her for the first time. Then perhaps to recover from the shock, he would retire to the outside and seat himself in the sand, where the other men would come and greet him. After that there would be the wedding feast.

For the rest of the day I surveyed the desert for some lonely, "shamed" and waiting figure, but none appeared.

CHAPTER XIII

It was natural, perhaps, that that night the talk over the Turkish coffee outside the tent in the desert should be on marriage. Assour is a married man, at twenty-three; his wife is now thirteen and a half, and she has been a wife for more than a year. He is a trifle worried that he has as yet no child. No son, rather; a daughter simply would not enter into his scheme of life at all.

But it appears that Assour was married late, according to his ideas on the matter. At different times for some years marriages were arranged for him, but something always happened. Arranged is the word, for sentiment and previous acquaintance do not enter into it. The girls in his village are secluded very early.

"For five years I try to make wedding," he said softly and reminiscently, as he sat in the sand that night. "But I have bad luck. Each year somebody die and I cannot."

"Would that stop a wedding?"

"Yes, madams. Each year I try, and then at the new year a baby die, or an old gentlemans, and it cannot be."

But when it came it was a great affair,

according to Abou Taleb, who was serving the coffee and only required a little encouragement at any time to talk.

"I wait at the tables," he says. "We had twelve big lights in a great tent, and everybody he come. From the desert, from Cairo, from the American Express Company. They all come, and eat, and drink. Tea, coffee, cocoa, champagne, wine and beer we had, and many other things. Meat and preserves and chicken, more than you ever saw. And music for three days and eight women to dance, *eight!*"

He contemplates this magnificence in retrospect, his eyes almost shut.

"Me, I not drink, ever," he says. "But on the third night I staggering like drunk, so tired. So I take one glass and I fall over. And my head! Ah!"

He grasps his head, he rolls his eyes. One can see him "staggering like drunk." The infernal everlasting beat of the Arab music, the tireless squatting musicians, the endless three-day clutter of food and drink, dirty dishes, scraps of food, children, beggars, flies. Food and yet more food. The women on the platform in the tent dancing unveiled, their eyes painted black with kohl, their muscular and suggestive abdominal dancing calculated to inflame the crowd, but somehow failing, because it has eaten and drunk too much. And

from behind the tent Abou Taleb everlastingly carrying in bottles and great platters of food, until at last he "staggered like drunk."

And in Assour's new three-room house near by the twelve-year-old child bride, in a dress from a store in Cairo and a veil over her face, sat with the women of the two families and waited for her husband. Her hair dressed with strings of gold bangles, her thin little wrists and her neck covered with them, they hung to her waist, this bridal dowry of gold necklaces, like chains. They *are* chains.

"But is she happy?" I ask Assour.

"At first she cry," he says frankly. "Every day she cry. She want her mother. But now she all time very happy. And she keeps my house clean, very clean."

Later on after our return we went out to Assour's house. It was by way of a reunion, that little party of Assour's; here were Smeda and Abdul Baggi with our camels once more. And at the house it was Abou Taleb who admitted us and later served the meal. But my one interest was focused in the smiling little child wife, dressed in her wedding garments for my pleasure, and in the black veil lest perchance the Head should glance through the door into the bedroom where she sat alone.

A sizable bedroom, with a huge clothes-press,

a low Oriental settee under the windows, and a great brass bed with a canopy of orange and pink satine. So high a bed that the little bride required steps to get into it! The windows of the bedroom looked out on a tall blank wall.

She remained there. It was not possible that she join us at the meal of chicken, conserves and fruits stewed with nuts. The bedroom was the harem, the woman's quarter of the house, and there she stayed. She does not leave the place, and she cannot read or write. The women of Assour's family and her own may visit her, and that is all.

There is meek submission in her small and childish face. She knows no other life, and would not know how to face it if it came.

There is the commencement of a feminist movement in Egypt today; its first efforts will probably be directed against polygamy and easy divorce, but it will ultimately demand the release of its women from the seclusion of the harem. Among the very small upper class, where the women although secluded are carefully educated, this would be immediately possible. But one wonders about the others.

What will happen if the doors of all the Egyptian women's quarters are thrown open, the guards and eunuchs done away with, and these women are launched without preparation into a

world of which they know nothing? The first requisite of independence is the ability to protect oneself. And the small chatter and gossip of the average harem, the overemphasis on sex, and the existing wide gulf between the world of the Egyptian man and that of his women-kind, form no preparation whatever.

Our sentimentalists who urge the opening of the harem doors must consider these two things: first, that the women themselves as a rule prefer the protection of their present mode of life. Such a social revolution must come from within the women's quarters, and there is no general indication that they desire it. And second: this matter of lack of preparation for freedom; actually, its danger.

But no such thoughts lay behind the meek, submissive child face of Assour's wife. Two ambitions only were hers, to make her handsome young lord comfortable, and to bear him a son. She does not go outside the high plastered wall; she cannot read. Her small household duties attended to she must sit alone, waiting for her lord's return, or for some visit from Assour's mother or her own.

No wonder "at first she cry; every day she cry."

Abou Taleb, on the other hand, has an old wife. She has borne him eleven children. And all of them but one are dead. The fourteen-year-old

boy who survives is the size of a child of eight, and already blind in one eye.

"Why have they lost all those children?" I asked Assour.

"They poor people," he said. "They have not much to eat. And besides, they do not know how to take care of them. Very ignorant people."

Abou Taleb, like all of our outfit, had only one wife. And that polygamy is not accepted by the women without feeling is shown by what he said to me one night, as he washed his dishes on the sand, and I sat near in my steamer chair.

"You have only one wife, too, Abou Taleb?"

He paused, to polish the inside of a glass.

"Only one, my lady," he said. He had picked up the phrase somewhere. "But she grows old and I need another one to look after my house. But when I tell her 'I get another wife to help you,' she do not like it. She cry a great deal, so I do not."

E FORTUNE TELLER

CITADEL AT CAIRO

Photo by Lehnert & Landrock

THE STREET OF THE BRASS WORKERS

CHAPTER XIV

After the political discussions of Cairo, we found the men a constant interest. Their prayers, preceded in the absence of water by ablutions performed in the desert sand; their primitive nationalism, a recent development but one increasingly menacing to the British; their small domestic affairs; the short and simple annals of the poor—all these engrossed us.

One of them, in his rare leisure, was knitting a tiny cap for his baby, of orange and purple and yellow and pink and green. A dreadful thing, yet as it grew under his awkward fingers somehow beautiful.

Another, Katil, the humorist of the party and a good-looking boy of twenty, was already practically blind. Contrary to our general belief, the eye-diseases of the Orient are not of venereal origin, but are the result of a germ infection of great violence. But Katil, as all the others we met so afflicted, was entirely philosophic in his attitude. "If God wills" expresses his acceptance of his fate.

Among all the lower orders, however, there is

a curious indifference to maiming, to mutilation and to blindness. Where they give to the crippled and the blind, it is rather to avert the evil eye than out of sympathy. There is, I believe, no word for pity, as we know it, in Arabic. And cases were numerous during the war when to avoid conscription, men sacrificed a finger or even an eye. They had no knowledge of the flat feet and other obscure troubles resorted to by their more sophisticated brothers of the west.

It was Katil, then, who amused us in the evenings. Katil, who, whitening his face with flour and pinning a tail to the back of his girdle, tucked up his skirts and became a trained ape; Katil whose stories, probably highly improper, sent the little circle on the sand into spasms of suppressed laughter; Katil, the donkey boy, whose séances with Gazelle, the headstrong, were always drawn battles; Katil, whose smile was always cheery, and whose tales were like stories out of the Arabian nights.

In a year or so he will be blind. Not for him then the shimmering mirage, those lakes so close that sometimes it seemed that a step or two would find our camels in the water, again so far that the thirst-driven wanderer uses his last strength to reach them, only to find them receded again over the edge of the world. Nor the gazelles, small and dainty and infinitely fast, colored like

the sand and speeding like the wind. His only the labor of the day's travel, a little food at night, and for a bed the desert floor and his thin and ragged cloak. And in a year or so, the whining voice and outstretched hand of the street beggar.

It was about this time, I think, that we took the flu. For several days ominous sneezes and chills had warned us, but we kept on. The Head talked of the irritation of the sand on mucous passages, at first; later on his language was less professional and rather violent. We took to tying handkerchiefs over our noses in the daytime, and wearing thermometers in our mouths in the evenings.

And still we had to go on. We added to our various motions on our camels violent chills; we tried to tell each other our symptoms at the same time, or I would say to the Head: "How are you feelig dow?"

And he would reply, through his handkerchief:

"Sibply rotted. Whose idea was this dabdable trip adyhow?"

There came a day when camp had to be made early, and I fell off Dahabeah and crawled into bed, hat and all. Assour took to praying behind the tent for the success of the trip and our recovery, especially I think for the Head's disposition. And the little circle of men whispered together about the evil eye. It was about that

time that one of them produced a small and ancient amulet and gave it to me.

"To bring you long life and good health," he said.

"I don't want to live," I groaned. "Take it away."

So still we went on, taking our chills and fevers as they came, consoling Assour, and eating more and more for fear of offending Mohammed. And at last, we reached the far end of the Fayum, and peace and recovery. For one day there we lay in our beds recovering, doing cross-word puzzles and smiling cheerfully when the camels grunted outside. Let them grunt; let them roll; let them snarl and eat. Let them do anything but carry us for a day or so.

"Name a locality in Gilead."

"Balm, and this is the place."

The Fayum is the first of the oases in the Libyan desert. It is at the eastern end so close to the Nile that it is generally considered to belong to that valley, but a stretch of desert and a bleak chain of hills separate it from the river country. At the western end, however, where we were encamped, there was little or no indication of the fertility for which the oasis is famous.

Here the soft rolling dunes of deep desert sand descend to Lake Karun, that strange body of water which lies a hundred and fifty feet below

sea-level; around its edge marsh grasses, reeds and prickly desert plants; on its surface wild ducks in numbers. And in its waters, *fish.*

Now when Assour had said that I should go fishing in the Sahara desert, I had considered it merely one manifestation of the Oriental temperament. But Baedeker, without specifically mentioning fish, did say that the Bedouins who live in this portion of the country are mostly poor fishermen.

After our experience with them, I decided that poor was the word. But the paragraph indicated fish and vindicated Assour.

Strange to think that over four thousand years ago this natural lake and depression in the desert was used as a reservoir to catch and hold the overflow from the Nile during its inundation, to be used for irrigation later during the dry season; that in process of this work, the ancients built a great retaining wall, or dam, twenty-seven miles long! Strange too to think that on its banks grew up flourishing towns, one known as Crocodilopolis, with a temple to the crocodile gods in the lake, although there are now no crocodiles in or anywhere near it.

What tribute was paid to these hideous monsters, thus exalted to godship! They wore precious jewels around their thick necks and as bracelets on their short and stubby legs, and

carried down into the mud and ooze of the lake bottom the finest specimens of the jeweler's art; enamels inlaid with gold and gems, delicately forged chains, so fine the eye could scarcely see the links, engraved rock crystals and charms, and emblems of precious stones. Even pearls perhaps, brought from the Persian Gulf, pearls brought up by starving Arab divers whose noses were closed by wooden clamps, whose forefingers wore finger-stalls to dislodge the often ragged shells, and who must work all day without food in the cold and shadowy depths.

Strangest cult of all, this cult of the crocodile! At feeding time the monstrous gods emerged from the slime, to be fed delicate food thrown them by their worshippers. To propitiate them the poor went hungry, and stood by watching them as, sated with richness, they sank back again to carry their prayers and their messages to who knows what powers of the underworld.

But now the lake has shrunk. The ruins of the ancient city stand high and dry, a rubble of stone, old mud and desert sand. Somewhere close by, but buried deep, must be a vast treasure trove of tribute, but it has not been uncovered.

Now, I am so constituted that the sight of any body of water inflames me. Its beauty is secondary; such water means to me one of two things;

either it has fish in it, or it has not. But consider our situation. We had no rods, no reels, no lines, and no hooks. No worms either. Personally, I doubt if the entire Libyan desert can produce one single angleworm. And my attempt to describe the trout fly to Assour met with no particular success.

"Then how *can* I go fishing?" I asked him plaintively.

"Tomorrow madams go fishing," he said, smiling. "Have I not said that what madams wishes she shall have!"

So that evening we crawled weakly out of the bedroom tent and watched the sunset reflected in Lake Karun, and if the Head considered malarial mosquitoes, I dreamed of fish. Rose and amethyst and yellow turned the waters, and the high sand dunes behind us blazed with glory. A little procession of men with sacks from some unseen village plodded along; somewhere in the desert there is salt, and the next day they would fill their sacks with it and carry it back to their houses.

Little jackals howled as the moon came up, and Smeda sat by a tiny fire, crooning his ancient songs. The Head watching the moon, and remembering the astronomy lesson, turned to Assour, crouching silent near by.

"You understand now, Assour, why we do not see the full moon all the time?"

And Assour devoutly answered: "Yes, sair. Because Allah make it so."

CHAPTER XV

I HAVE done some queer fishing in strange places, but that next day's fishing and hunting was the strangest yet.

Early in the morning Abou Taleb wakened us with the breakfast tray, and as soon as I was dressed I went outside into the cold air. Assour was there, proudly holding out my fishing equipment. It consisted of a branch of some sort of oasis shrub, about four feet long. To the end of this was tied about six feet of ordinary white string, and on the end of that a hook. Not since I fished for minnows in the creek on my great aunt's farm, and then rushed madly to the rain barrel with them, have I carried such an outfit. But Assour's pride was so great that I could express only admiration and surprise. I did, however, inquire about bait, but he waved that aside with a gesture.

"The fishermen they have somethings," he said.

So we started on the camels as usual. But half way there the flu took a fresh grip on the Head and he turned back.

"You go alog," he said.

"What are you going to do?"

"I dod't dow, and I dod't give a dab," he said, and turned Missouri firmly around.

So I went on, with my escort, and after three miles or so we saw a fisherman on the bank, and a felucca in the water. I do not know exactly what I had expected a felucca to be; something like Cleopatra's barge, perhaps, with a canopy to shield me from the sun and sturdy rowers in brilliant striped garments. And there may be such feluccas. But this was not one.

It was made of rough planks, huge and heavy, and sat high out of the water. No paint, no sail, no canopy. The fishermen sat on high boards, with their feet on branches thrust across below, for the boat was not floored. And their oars, twelve to fourteen feet long, were nothing but clumsily cut pieces of wood, without blades, but square and heavy at the rower's end to counterbalance their extreme length.

Scanty and incredible rags covered the two poor wretches who took me out, a father and a son. Their exposed torsos were thin and undernourished, their faces drawn. No wonder Baedeker speaks of these Bedouins who so strangely have taken to the water as poor fishermen. There, within call of them almost, was the rich and mighty oasis of the Fayum, but none of its prosperity reaches them. They are considered bad

people: treacherous, even murderous, but it seemed to me to be the wickedness of desperation.

Under their feet, in the bottom of the boat, were their fish creels, bags made of the reeds that grow along the lake marshes, strongly plaited. And in one of them lay a few very small fish, the morning's catch. The largest I saw was not more than seven inches. In the bow was their day's food, a small supply of dates.

It being impossible to bring the unwieldy vessel to the shore, I was seized with the bright idea of taking Dahabeah into the water. With a roar, however, she leaped the other way, and there was considerable activity on that sandy bank before she became pacified sufficiently to kneel. In the end, I was carried in a most undignified manner on Smeda's back.

Assour followed. And for the first time I noticed that he carried the blunderbuss.

"We get ducks," he said. "Plenty ducks here. You will see. Assour is good shooter."

Rather, he shouted it, for a peculiar din which had ceased on our arrival now resumed again. It sounded like the combination of a steam riveter and a Chinese gong, and I was not long in tracing its origin.

Moving up and down the lake were four other fishing feluccas. Two men rowed them, one to each oar, while a third produced this incredible

racket with a piece of iron. Our own boat having one also, I was able to examine this instrument of torture. It consisted of a bar of iron about two and a half feet long, with a hole in each end; into each hole was inserted an iron ring, and by placing it across the thwart of the boat and alternately banging it on the inside and the out, the resulting noises were as sharp and as rapid as machine gun fire. Conversation during the process was impossible.

I had stepped back three thousand years, I felt, into some ceremonial of driving away the fish demon, or some hobgoblin of the East. But the explanation was quite simple after all. The fishermen had spread a sort of gill net, and by this process were driving the fish toward it. Maybe it works; I do not know. My own idea would be that those fish not too stunned to move at all would make tracks for the far end of the lake, and quietness.

Certainly I caught no fish. In vain I dangled my five feet of string, baited with a piece of fish intestine—to fool the fish into thinking it was a worm, probably; in vain I changed the bait to fish fins and then to fish eyes. And beside me on the high bow Assour loaded the blunderbuss, and then pointing it at me examined the breech, while I held my breath and prayed.

It was freezing cold. Over my woolen dress

and sweater I wore a heavy coat; Assour was bundled to the eyes. But those poor half-naked wretches sat there in their cotton rags, satisfied only to rest on their oars, to exchange doubtless sarcastic remarks on my fishing, and to look with longing eyes on the blunderbuss. The old man wanted to do the shooting. He said in effect that if Assour was a good shooter he was a better, and he called Allah to witness that he would get us more ducks than we could eat.

Assour accepted, finally. The gun had a kick like an ostrich's leg, and he knew it. He handed it over, and I drew in my line and prepared to go duck hunting.

Now my previous knowledge of duck shooting had been something like this: One rose at 3:30 A.M. and, while shivering, drank a cup of coffee. Then one put on all the woolens one had along, and a pair of rubber boots and a mackintosh, and with the precaution of a burglar climbing into a bedroom window rowed or waded to the blind and there stood or sat, hardly breathing, for an indefinite period, the only sound the scraping of goose-flesh and the chattering of teeth.

But not so now. Our fisherman tucked up his white cotton rags and let himself over the side. There were ducks a hundred yards away. He waded toward them, and they flew away. He came back to the boat, and we rowed after them.

He got over the side once more, and the same performance was repeated.

After we had done this five or six times I suggested to Assour that he fire at them while they were in the air, but the fisherman objected that they flew too fast. His idea was apparently to get close enough to brain them with the butt of the gun. And knowing that gun I hardly blamed him. But at last I persuaded him to make the attempt. And after using forty shells he got two. One, however, we picked up wounded from the lake, and I am inclined to believe it belonged to an Englishman who was shooting in the marshes at the same time.

Taking our bag we then turned shoreward, and my progress away from the water on Dahabeah was nothing less than a flight. Only once did she stop on the way back to camp, and that was suddenly, in order to scratch her stomach with her left hind foot, an experience much resembling an earthquake only perhaps more violent.

We had one of the ducks for dinner that night, and our aristocracy among the men, Assour, Smeda, Mohammed and Abou Taleb, shared the other. Or rather, only three of them, for Abou Taleb refused it. The good Moslem eats only meat killed by the cutting of the throat, and our ducks had been shot.

"Then you are not a good Mohammedan, Smeda?" I said to him later.

"But I cut throat," said Smeda, cheerfully, making a gesture with his forefinger to his neck. "Maybe duck not all dead, so I cut throat. All right then. Very good."

CHAPTER XVI

It was our tenth and last evening in the desert. Even then, as we sat in the sunset, we could see to our left far away the trees and gardens of Senures, where Robert Hichens took Bella Donna to camp under the date palms with her husband while she dreamed of her lover, and where we too were to camp the next day.

We sat long outside the tent that night over our coffee and Turkish delight, while the little jackals barked, and the moon rose and shone on those waters where once the sacred crocodiles had lain, bedizened, in the mud.

We rode to Senures the next morning. Once again fertile land, with the spring plowing going on, and every variety of animal hitched to the plows; once again the long processions going out to the fields from the little mud villages; once again children of eight and ten leading enormous pack camels, called hubble-hubbles, from the resemblance of the gurgling noise they made to that of the water pipe so named; once more the greeting "Saïda," and its cheery return.

One elderly gentleman added to his greeting from the door of his house an invitation to coffee,

THE DESERT NEVER CHANGES

DAHABEAH'S NECK WAS ALWAYS ITCHY

ASSOUR, SMEDA, MOHAMMED THE COOK, AND ABOU TALEB, THE WAITER

but Assour glanced at the sun and then politely declined. On and on. The date palms were coming closer, the sun getting higher and hotter. Then Senures at last, and luncheon under a palm tree, while we waited for the rest of the caravan.

It was at Senures that Dahabeah saw her first railway train, and gave every evidence of hysteria. A narrow-gauge line runs into the town, and along it screaming and humping came the train. With a low moan of terror Dahabeah prepared to seek the desert again, but Abdul Baggi grabbed her tail and, so to speak, there she was. She trembled violently, however, for some time. It was the next day that Missouri sadly behaved on a similar occasion. The Head was half-way on her when she heard a train, and proceeded to do some first-grade bucking and pitching in the midst of three thousand clay water jars, ready to be loaded. The Head, however, was saved.

But there was no balking the fact. We were in civilization again, and evidences of it began the moment the tents were up in our grove of palm trees.

First came a variety of dogs, and then of children. Accustomed as we were by that time to eccentric hair cutting, one child with a large square patch shaved on top of his head caught my eyes and I asked Assour the reason.

"Just for fancy," said Assour blandly. "Maybe

there been a wedding, or something." And went away.

Which left me as much in the air as the little boy who teased the old sailor to tell him how he lost his leg.

"If I tell you, will you promise not to ask another question?"

"Sure, I'll promise."

"Well, then, it was bit off."

After the dogs and the children came the visiting barber. He brought a set of strange and archaic tools, and having shaken hands all round and taken up a sitting position in a bowl-shaped depression in the sand, proceeded to wait for customers. As fast as our men finished their work they went to him, squatting on the ground before him and facing him. The ancient razor tortured their sun-burned faces. The same antique brass bowl of water did for all.

Ali's mustache was trimmed once more to its tidy points. Katil's curly head emerged from the clippers like a cottage with bare walls and a thatched roof, and from some place unknown an elderly gentleman with a three-weeks' growth of beard and a yellow turban joined the waiting list and took his turn with the rest.

When each customer had finished he paid what he considered the job to be worth—one piaster, or two, five or ten cents. Whatever he received,

the barber took it courteously and without comment. When he had finished he packed up his belongings and politely departed, joining that throng of now returning laborers who were on their way back from the day's work along the main road before us.

It was a strange and growing procession. From narrow dikes along the canals, from tiny paths among the palm trees, came again the precious livestock driven in to safety for the night. Nervous water buffalo shied at our white tents and lumbered off wildly into the alfalfa; cows, donkeys, sheep, goats and camels, men, women and children, each treading on the heels of the one before, moved compactly and sedately back into the town. And the mud walls of the town swallowed them up and we saw them no more.

The old dyer, his arms purple to the elbows, who had been beating his black dyed cloth in the ditch nearby us, accompanying each blow with a sharp "hish" through his teeth, wrung out his last garment and putting it with the others on a tray, started home with the tray balanced on his head; the women who had been washing vegetables for the market just above him eased their bent backs and started off likewise. And a lady who had been for some time sitting chin deep in the ditch above the vegetable washers, her clothes neatly stacked on top of her head, ended this

ceremonial of purification as dusk fell and quietly slipped away.

Dinner and coffee in the moonlight under the palm trees. And then the paying off, the *bakshish*. As each man received his percentage he shook hands and said:

"May Allah give you long life and make you happy."

The next morning, before we left, I went to visit Dahabeah. After all, she had done fairly well by me. By trips and so on she had carried me a hundred miles, and now that I was through with her I liked her.

"Good-bye, old girl," I said. "Let's forget it and part friends."

I made a last and cautious effort to pat her on her moth-eaten head, but she only snarled at me and showed her teeth. And so I left her under Bella Donna's palm trees, and got into a Ford car!

CHAPTER XVII

"But can you not see," said the woman in dirty black, "that these are rich people? And am I blind that I see it not?"

"Avaricious one!" said Abdullah. "Have I not given you already twenty piasters? And have they not bought you beer?"

We were in a tiny room off a back street in Luxor. The flies were thick, those dogged Egyptian flies which return the moment you cease brushing them away, so that our fly whisks lay neglected in our laps; the heat was beyond words, and crowding and pressing about us, shutting out such air as there was, was an Egyptian holiday crowd, intent and not too friendly.

"Give her something and let's get out," said the Head.

He broached a passage-way, the woman calling after us things it is well we did not understand, and at his determined attitude the crowd fell back. Behind us the drum and pipes began again, and the two dancing women in cotton stockings and run-down American shoes began again their posturing and grinning, their abdominal gyrations and their stilted, un-beautiful steps.

Sweat poured from their wide faces, the crowd kept time by clapping its hands, and sickly warm beer circulated at prices a third of what we had paid.

It was a religious holiday in Luxor.

The procession was still moving about the narrow streets to the beating and bleating of two native bands; many gayly trapped camels, each with a hooded palanquin on top, black Sudanese dancers afoot, whirling and leaping, thousands of men and children, afoot and on donkeys, it passed and repassed us. One camel carried two great drums, one on each side, and an agile drummer on the top beat them both at once; another with a green canopy Abdullah told us carried the clothing of the Prophet, but we have no other authority for the statement.

Dust rose from the unpaved streets, the drums beat, the flies settled down and the sun registered a direct hit the moment one ventured into it. In the shade of a building we drew up our carriage and there let the procession pass us once more.

And as we sat, with that barbaric and ancient procession moving by, a gentle, unctuous voice spoke from beside us.

"You are Americans?" it said.

We stared. The voice had come from a native, in cloak and turban, who stood beside us.

"Yes."

"Ah!" he breathed. "And how is everything over there? All right, eh?

"It was all right when we left."

"That's good."

He breathed a sigh of relief.

"I'm going back there this fall," he said softly. "I used to have a barber shop in Rochester, New York. I'm tired of this town. It's too old-fashioned for me."

He melted away into the crowd, and slipping between two whirling, leaping and shouting Sudanese, was lost to us.

"Very fine man," said Abdullah. "Sheik. Big business in America. Very rich. You not know him there?"

Abdullah had temporarily replaced Assour, and was called "the fortieth thief" by the Head. A little elderly man, as contrasted to Assour's smiling youth and comeliness, Abdullah early lost our confidence. There was the matter of the necklace which broke during my first and only donkey ride, half the beads of which are undoubtedly adorning the ears—and maybe the noses—of certain portions of the population of Luxor today. And there was the curious fact that, although we consistently gave him vast over-charges for divers carriages and so on, his payments invariably caused dire distress and loud wailings and protests.

Under such auspices we have therefore a legitimate reason to doubt certain of the information he gave us. Thus, in a tomb in the Valley of the Kings, he drew me aside and pointed to an ancient scene carved on the wall.

"You see that?" he said. "The ladies, they wear a tight skirt, eh? Like today?"

"Well, something like today," I agreed, observing that through the transparency the outlines of the wearers' bodies were considerably more than indicated.

Then he told me that some years ago a celebrated dressmaker from Paris, a woman, had spent several days in this tomb, making drawings, and that when she went home she brought out the sheath skirt, slash and all as it was pictured there!

And there was one point in his favor. There had been a sheath skirt—have I not worn one?—and it was neatly and deftly and not too modestly slashed.

CHAPTER XVIII

It was Abdullah who took us to the Valley of the Kings.

We had risen early, to precede the crowds and the dust, and in a small felucca we crossed the Nile. But early as it was already a crowd of donkey boys waited on the other side. Remembering my previous experience, we had wisely sent a car ahead by ferry, and in it we jolted and banged the seven miles back among the desert hills to the Valley.

The road twisted and turned. No particle of green, no living thing, relieved its white glare as the sun beat down upon it. Here and there a small exploratory excavation had been made and then abandoned, but outside of an occasional water boy, leading his donkey laden with cans to water, there was no sign of life.

True, behind us a procession was slowly forming. Tourists in cars and surreys, on donkey-back and afoot, were moving along. They represented all races, all nations. Not since the funerary processions of thousands of years ago has this valley known such numbers. I felt out of place, somehow ignoble and akin to the spoilers

who so long since had crept up this very path to violate the tombs. For solemnity and the beating of breasts we could offer only avid curiosity; even our clothes, our rattling car, seemed absurd and somehow irreverent.

And as we stood outside the tomb the feeling grew. Women in sun veils with green-lined parasols, German hikers in topees, full white shirts, short trousers and bare knees, English women with the inevitable British wrist watch, an American woman in knickerbockers and flat shoes, and another American woman who was describing her home in Santa Barbara—what right had we to go down into that tomb and stare at what was meant to be hidden from the world forever?

We went, of course.

The poor lad lay in his great sarcophagus, still covered by his gold and carved mummy case. Its painted, impassive face, in the full glare of an electric spot-light, looked singularly life-like; the gold leaf on the case gleamed. It was magnificent, and infinitely touching.

And then the man who was holding a stop watch on us said that our two minutes were up, and we went away.

"Have you seen Tut's tomb yet?" somebody asked a woman sitting exhausted on a rock. She wrinkled her brows.

"Tut?" she said. "I really don't know. I've

seen a lot of tombs, but our dragoman's no earthly good!"

Doctor Breasted, the great Egyptologist, told me not long ago of an amusing experience of his during the early days of the opening of the tomb.

They had opened the ante-chamber, and beyond a closed and cemented doorway they knew lay the unrifled body of the king. But before the doorway was opened, it was necessary to make careful copies of the seals impressed in the cement which covered it.

As all the world knows, this doorway was guarded, to right and left, by the two now familiar sentinel figures, life size, which have been so often photographed.

It was frightfully hot in this underground tomb, and very still. Doctor Breasted sat on a box, working at the doorway and perspiring freely. Suddenly he was conscious of a million small and whispering sounds, and of a sense of rustling and movement. He looked around. All was still, and he fell to work again.

But the sounds persisting, he looked up at one of the figures beside him, and it winked at him! He turned a little cold, but he pretended to go on working, and then suddenly looked up once more. It winked *again.*

It was too much! He leaped to his feet and confronted the creature. Then he saw what it

was. A bit of paint had loosened and was hanging on the edge of the carved eye-lid, and in the current of air this flake was moving up and down. The air, newly admitted to the tomb, was also responsible for the rustling and the creaking. Rapid deterioration was going on in the priceless jumble all around him. But there was no ghost.

Naturally, superstition has been rife among the natives, however, since the opening of the tomb. So far as I remember the story, these fears began to be evident with the first discovery of the steps leading into the crypt. On or about that very day came the first casualty, a small one but to the natives significant.

Howard Carter had imported a canary, for there were no singing birds about, and this hung in the house near the Nile where the investigators were living. On this day, then, the canary was heard in distress, and when help reached it a cobra was found coiled in the cage and the bird was dead.

As the cobra was the royal serpent, the natives began to whisper among themselves.

The excavation went on, and soon the antechambers were opened. But here trouble which was to cost a valuable life developed. Lord Carnarvon was bitten by a mosquito. He paid no attention to the bite, and a day or so later shaved over it, leaving an abraded surface. A fly stung

him on this open surface, and the poisoning set in which was later to result in his death.

Now indeed the natives talked, and whispered of a curse. First the cobra and then the fly, and the fly too in the long ago had been an emblem of the king. Absurd? Perhaps, but this is not the end.

As the ante-chambers to the tomb were to be emptied, it was necessary to treat the various objects before their removal with preservatives. Paraffine and other substances were used, and doing this work was a specialist in that line, an expert in his particular field. But his health began rapidly to fail; tuberculosis set in, and the last I knew of him he was in the Riviera, in very bad condition indeed.

However, in spite of mishaps and tragedy, the work at the tomb must go on. The inner door was finally torn down, and the giant sarcophagus was revealed. Although it gave no indication of having been rifled, no one could be certain, and the task of removing the outer sheath would require several months. In order to be certain, then, Mr. Carter and the men associated with him sent to London for an X-ray expert, on the theory that an X-ray photograph would show the presence of the mummy if it still lay within. And that man died in Paris, on his way to Egypt!

Coincidences? Probably, but no native will so believe.

CHAPTER XIX

It is the height of arrogance to attempt to pass judgment on any people, after two or three months' study, even if that study has been fairly intensive.

Beautiful and marvelously fertile, the Nile Valley and its people have inspired visitors from Herodotus on; old Herodotus, who apparently went around with a tape measure and a note book and who thus—I hope unfairly—describes a religious journey to Budastis:

"Men and women sail together. Some of the women make a noise with rattles, and some of the men blow pipes during the whole journey. . . . If they pass a town on the way they lay to, and some of the women land and shout and mock at the women of the place, while others dance and make a disturbance."

For thousands of years the Egyptians have occupied the Nile Valley. In that time the country has been overrun by Ethiopians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Turks, but inter-marriage has not affected the physical type. Like China, Egypt has assimilated her conquerors, and has made them her own.

Even animals, imported into the country, after a time take on the physical characteristics of the native stock. It may be said that the Nile puts its mark, indelible and lasting, on all that it touches.

Dark of skin, from the olive of the north to the brown or deep bronze of Upper Egypt, the straight black brows, dark heavily fringed eyes, slightly receding forehead and high cheek bones of the Egyptian type remain today as they are shown in paintings and reliefs on the walls of the earliest tombs.

Peasants, or *fellahin,* form the great bulk of the population. Hard-working, sober and often tragically poor, their food is simple, even meager. Save during the feast days following the fast of Ramadan, they are practically vegetarians; maize bread, broad beans, lettuces and onions, cucumbers and pumpkins form the bulk of their diet, with goat, sheep or water-buffalo milk, soured or converted into cheese.

Their sheep and goats provide the wool for their cloaks and blankets; their body clothes are of cotton, and their houses of mud bricks dried in the sun. A few mats, some cooking utensils and dishes form the furnishing of these houses, which in that climate are only shelters for the night.

On the bent backs of these people, hard-working, resigned, but of recent years showing a

certain sullenness, the structure of modern Egypt has been built up. So far they have been merely passive resisters, taking blows sometimes rather than pay their taxes, but content to talk and smoke in their rare leisure, rather than take steps for their betterment.

Disorganized and illiterate—less than ten per cent of the entire population can read and write—in touch only with the regions to the immediate north and south of them, bound together by no bonds of patriotism as we know it, they justify the statement that the Egyptians are a race rather than a nation.

The attempt of the British, therefore, to give a constitutional government to these people has naturally been a failure. The high-class Egyptians, cultured and with vision, watched with trepidation the experiment of sending to the Parliament at Cairo some six hundred unscrupulous and ignorant deputies, and were not disappointed.

Last March (1925) Zaghloul Pasha, whose platform is based on the immediate withdrawal of the British from Egypt and the Sudan, was triumphantly elected, and the British were threatened with an attempt at eviction by the very government they had formed!

Only threatened, however. King Fouad, placed on his throne by the British, promptly disclaimed the election and dissolved the Parliament, and has

at the time of this writing been ruling peacefully —and illegally!—ever since.

Not so easily can democracy be placed in the hands of those who are still unfitted for it. And unless America is prepared to support by arms her contention that small nations have a right to determine for themselves their form of government, far better that she had never formulated it.

That the position of the British in Egypt is precarious cannot be doubted. The emissaries of Zaghloul and the leaders of the Nationalist party are constantly working on the *fellahin*. Their word of mouth propaganda goes up and down the Nile, growing as it travels, and an illiterate people hears and believes.

That the British intend to steal the Nile for use in the Sudan is but one of these stories. A low Nile this year, and one can see the *fellahin* watching. And little groups squatted around doorways in village streets, ominous, waiting. For the Nile is life to them; a foot of decrease, tragedy.

That the British used Egypt during the war for her own ends is another. They saw the Turkish suzerainty abolished, and no bar to their nascent nationalism but the British. The British were to get out, and leave them free. But the British did not get out, and they feel that they have exchanged the corruption of Turkish rule for something no better, and possibly worse.

So much for the rank and file. It does not concern them now that the British for forty years have given them a masterpiece of colonial government; have run their railways on schedule time, dug them their irrigation ditches and greatly increased the national prosperity. They neither like nor understand the British, and the British neither like nor understand them.

"I liked the old Turk," said one elderly farmer. "When I visited him in his office, he would ask me to sit down, and inquire about my family. And maybe send out and order coffee.

"But now I go into the office. An Englishman has his feet on his desk and his pipe in his mouth. He says: 'Hello there, Ahmed! What the deuce are you after?'

"And he will do what I want, if he can. Probably the old Turk wouldn't. But somehow I liked the old Turk!"

Not the least of the British errors in colonization and occupation has been the tactless assumption that a conquered people is an inferior people.

CHAPTER XX

The ruling class in Egypt is largely, although not entirely, of Turkish blood. Thus Hassanein Bey, Chamberlain to the King and Egypt's great explorer, is the son of a Bedouin of high rank and a Circassian mother. It was Hassanein Bey who took with him on his trip to the Forbidden City Rosita Forbes, the Englishwoman, a fact which that lady forgot to emphasize on her book of the journey.

The Turk is a born ruler, a master of men. True, his methods are not ours, they consist often of periods of laxness followed by a descent with fire and the sword. But a strong ruling class is necessary over an illiterate and ignorant people, until in time to come that ignorance and that illiteracy are abolished.

The failure of the attempt at constitutional government showed certain weaknesses of the British administration in Egypt, and not the least of these has been in the direction of education. If forty years ago they had built for today in that regard, they would not, and King Fouad today would not, be dealing with a proletariat they cannot reach. Its sullenness slowly changing to fury,

a passionate and uninstructed people may rise at any time, and dethroning the King, attempt to drive out his British support. They have already forced the King to a declaration of a free Egypt and a free Sudan.

That Egypt hopes for eventual complete independence is natural enough; that she is not yet ready for it must be the private opinion of many of her more intelligent people. And the British, whose lot there in recent years has been only one of anxiety and trouble, feel that they cannot let go.

British capital is heavily invested there, for one thing, and there is also a sense of responsibility.

"If we go now," one official said to me, "Egypt in spite of herself will become a bakshish country again. Taxes will be diverted, and bribery and corruption will eat up the revenues. There is no adequate administrative class; it will take time to develop one. And in the interval there will be chaos."

Again, and this time from a prince:

"Our faults are for all to see," he said. "We are selfish, suspicious, jealous and without vision. We build for ourselves, caring neither for the past nor for the future. And trusting to no one, we lose our own good faith."

Not Egyptian only, these weaknesses. All the Orient must plead guilty to them, and not a little

of the West. But curiously, Mohammedan countries seem to show these traits in very high degree. It is hard to say why, for the religion of Allah is an ethical and highly moral one, although it has been debased by its fanatics and its more ignorant adherents.

Perhaps what Egypt requires is not only education, but a spiritual re-awakening.

Cultivated, delightful people, these upper-class Egyptians. Traveled and cultured, polyglot in tongue, rich many of them even beyond our conception of wealth, they provide the color and light and sparkle of life in a country of indomitable industry and drab living conditions.

True, the veil persists, but is largely a convention; it hides nothing. And true, too, that the upper-class woman is still secluded, not appearing at mixed gatherings. But her isolation is not immolation; it is perhaps a matter of pride.

Yet the effect of a theatre entirely filled with men in the conventional frock coat of Egyptian full dress, with red tarbushes on their heads, is not easily forgotten. Nor are those curtained boxes near the stage, behind whose impenetrable hangings are the only women in the house except oneself.

Yet there may be wisdom in it. At a ball in Constantinople we saw Turkish women of high rank, newly liberated from the veil and the harem.

Some of the more conventional still wore the hair covered with a black veil, twisted rather like a cap, but many had nothing. Some of them were quite lovely, but like all people who change from eastern to our ugly western dress, they had lost something. The short skirt and box-like lines were out of place on bodies trained to draperies and to veils.

A Turkish woman in short skirts and French heels dancing the fox-trot may represent emancipation. But it is rather like the emancipation of Doctor Mary Walker and her trousers.

So the strangeness of a society largely womanless persists. We were, one day, invited to the house of a most delightful Pasha to luncheon. A cosmopolitan and delightful man of the world, he served us Turkish food from one of the few remaining Turkish kitchens in Cairo, and such food as few may find anywhere. But although there were a dozen of us, and half were women, of the ladies of his household we saw no sign.

A great house it was, set in a great garden. High walls surrounded it on all sides, and through an arched gate we drove in. Men in Turkish livery received us, and inside the entrance the Pasha himself made us welcome.

The palace was built around a large court, marble floored. Part of it has been opened since the war, and at the request of one of the guests the Pasha showed us photographs of its hidden

glories. I have known and visited some great houses, but nothing I have ever seen compared with what we saw that day in the ——— Palace, tucked away in the heart of Cairo behind its concealing wall.

The fact is that the west knows luxury, but the East has splendor. From the scented air of the dining room to the ceremony of coffee, with its five acolytes in Mameluke costume to serve it, its equipage swinging from a silver chain; from the six-foot stems of the chibouka, their tiny bowls reposing on silver platters on the floor, each with a lighted coal on top to keep it burning, and the amber mouth-pieces banded with diamonds and with rubies, beauty, ceremony and dignity presided. And in the midst of them moved the prince himself, no longer young, but kindly and hospitable.

All around him a new Egypt is arising, and Turk of the old régime that he is, it must puzzle him sometimes. The Turks gone, and the British in full control; the British aloof and cold, and not too tactful.

Even the gold coffee cups, set with diamonds, rubies and pearls, had been a gift from the former Khedive; the cigarette holders, some studded with diamonds, others with mouthpieces of great emeralds, possibly came from the same royal source. And now the very overseers from his

cotton fields may perhaps go to Cairo as deputies, and vote as they are convinced, or bribed!

Power has been placed in untried hands, and all day and all night guards watch alike the British Residency and the palace of the King.

CHAPTER XXI

It is the end of the season, in Cairo. The hall porters are calculating their gains in leisure moments. The Sudanese boys, in their long full velvet trousers and their zouave jackets, are preparing for their spring move toward the Equator, where they will probably wear nothing to speak of; men in dirty white robes with equally dirty turbans are sweeping down the stone front of the building with brushes on handles eighteen feet long, for this is a Swiss hotel, and is the last word in cleanliness. The hairdresser and his staff, the maids and waiters will soon be gone to whatever part of Europe they hark from. And the dragomen——

What becomes of these splendid if slightly avaricious gentlemen when the season ends? Do they pack away those royal garments, the striped silk under-robe, the long outer dress of fine wool, the silk scarves, the little canes, and become as other men? Do they go back to their desert, for most of them are Bedouins, and live in a low and dirty camels'-hair tent, lording it over several wives and a dozen children? Or to their Arab villages where the dogs bark all night and they sit in

the endless discourse of their kind over tiny cups of thick coffee, while their women carry the heavy water jugs and tend their houses and their lords?

The jewelers, too, and the dealers in antiques. Already the jewelers at the hotels are reducing their prices, and preparing to steal away. The galli-galli man on the terrace at Shepheard's is still there, working longer hours, now that the end is in sight; pulling his day-old chickens from the waistcoats of embarrassed elderly gentlemen, eating fire and breaking eggs in hats reluctantly loaned.

But the season is over. The flies have come; they are quiet, but persistent. One wipes them away, but they return again and in the end one lets them stay. It is easier.

On the terrace, outside our bedroom overlooking the Nile, magpies come at the breakfast hour and shriek madly for bits of toast. An increasing line of dahabeahs is tied along the water front, their awnings down, their cushions and wicker deck furniture being put away.

The corner policemen have donned longish white coats with brass buttons; the baby carriages of resident Europeans have screened canopies erected over them against the flies, and small tots have veils attached to their hats.

At the sporting club the polo players are enveloped in clouds of dust. The races are over, and

today there is a sand storm and the very Nile looks dusty. The Pyramids are lost in a yellow haze, the date palms describe great arcs with their fronded tops, bowing like haughty ladies. Heavy glasses with shields at the sides, or veils, are necessary if one tries to go out doors. The parade ground near by is a sand storm in itself.

And toward the sea near Alexandria, and even as far as the hills of distant Lebanon, the movement away from the summer's heat is commencing.

As our train winds through the dawn, Egypt after her casual fashion is still asleep; servants asleep wherever they have dropped in the hotels, shepherds asleep behind reed or bush shelters in the fields, and villagers on the hard earth of their mud houses. The Nile is a silver thread, the Pyramids are crowned with rose.

But as the sun comes up Egypt rises. It makes, in the rural districts, no morning toilet. It sits up and draws its night wrapping of blankets over its shoulders, against the morning chill.

The stockades are opened. Young lambs and kids leap out, and baby camels, slower, awkward and long of leg. The older animals follow; they stop and sniff the morning air, then fall to grazing. From the chimneyless houses smoke begins to rise, hanging like a low white mist, and women with water jars on their heads appear and go for

water. Soon men in loin cloths are working at the primitive shidoufs, and the water wheels begin to whine.

"Why do you suppose they have blindfolded the bullock at that water wheel?" I ask.

"So he won't know he isn't getting anywhere," says the Head, philosophically.

And now begins the procession out to the fields. Along the high dike-like paths they move to the day's work, and as the sun grows higher and the train moves on we see them squatted on the ground, industrious and infinitely patient, cutting with their inadequate knives alfalfa, green and thick beyond belief.

Poppy fields in bloom; an old man at a wayside station, painstakingly searching his garments for fleas; a village headman in bright blue, on a horse caparisoned in purple velvet, his stirrups of silver and the saddle cantle of gold, his servant behind him with a crate of tiny live quail; poverty and splendor side by side, industry and indolence, beauty and squalor—Egypt.

And we are leaving it. Turning our faces from what we know a little to what we know not at all.

We are on our way to Bagdad.

BOOK II

HUNTING TROUBLE

CHAPTER I

BAGDAD really happened to us, like a toothache, or a punctured tire, or burglars. One minute we were comfortable, clean and civilized; the next we were on our way to the setting of Douglas Fairbanks' recent triumph, and were none of these.

It was all well enough for Mr. Fairbanks. He could romp around Bagdad all day, and at night he could climb his hill near Hollywood to a cold shower and a good dinner and Mary Pickford. But when evening came scuttling across the Tigris and brought with it a breath of air and a cloud of mosquitoes, we roused from a coma, climbed down our two flights of outside wooden stairs, looked away from the kitchen as we passed it, brushed a sparrow or two off the table in the dining room and sadly, morosely, ate what was put before us.

Bagdad is not as it was in Mr. Fairbanks' time.

* * * * * * *

On the terrace at Shepheard's one day we met two English aviators. They had, it developed, just flown over from Bagdad, and they surveyed Cairo from the tea table with eyes at once disillusioned and condescending.

"Civilized!" they said. "Might be Paris. Might be anywhere. Why don't you come to Bagdad?"

"Where *is* Bagdad?" we inquired. "And how do you get there?"

"Well, it was easy enough, according to their idea. I dare say anything seems simple when you have just reached Egypt in an aeroplane, after engine trouble and having to spend a night in a hostile desert, covered with sand to keep warm.

And then they were happy too; the Arabs had not stolen the plane during the night. Apparently they did not even know it was around, for when the aviators wakened in the morning there it was safe and sound!

Anyhow, they said that all one had to do was to go to Beirut in Syria, and start from there. The rest took care of itself. Some brave soul, fifteen months before, had decided it would be possible to take an automobile along one of the old camel caravan routes, and moreover had gone ahead and done it. Now it went regularly, a convoy of two or three cars, and it made in three days across the Syrian Desert and northern Arabia what had

formerly taken three weeks by sea and river, to Bagdad.

Three days! And the camel caravans take from one month to two!

Moreover, it was new country to the tourist, virgin country. New, that is, to the modern world. In the past the armies of the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Romans, the Greeks and the Turks knew it well. Across it they used to travel on those vast excursions for plunder, slaves and tribute which were the ancient wars. Out of it, also, had come that strange delegation of Arabs to the then Christian city of Constantinople, in the name of a new and unknown prophet named Mohammed, calling on it to renounce the Holy Trinity, and to believe in one God.

A new world, infinitely old.

Five minutes later we were in Cook's office in Cairo, sending a telegram to the Eastern Transport Company at Beirut for reservations for the following Monday. And we were no more than back in our own hotel than the papers announced the holding up of the Eastern Transport Company's convoy by Bedouins the day before, about half way across the desert, and the killing of the wife of the French vice-consul to Bagdad.

Our first fine flame of enthusiasm began to flicker; our faith in the magic carpet to die. A

three-days jaunt to the Euphrates and the Tigris was one thing; a flight between groups of murdering Arabs was quite another. And unfortunately just as that time I picked up a book which stated that the Bedouins of northern Arabia remained hostile to Europeans and were untrustworthy in the last degree.

However, the Head was doing a bit of reading also, and the Paris edition of the *Herald* reported the holding up of a Pullman train just outside Chicago and the successful looting of the passengers.

"Personally," he said, "I think we'd better stay out of America and be safe."

So in the end we went, crossing the Suez Canal at night at Kantara, the Gateway of the Desert, where begins the great caravan route across the Desert of Sinai to the site of old Babylon. The oldest caravan route in the world, it was along it that Moses guided the Israelites, and Napoleon led his army into Palestine. Here too came Joseph and Mary, with the Infant, on the flight from Herod.

And now through its sands cuts the great canal, and laden camels stare at ships where once was only desert and thirst, and the bones of men and animals bleaching in the sun.

Across this strange waterway we were ferried in the moonlight, to expose the private contents of

WE MEET THE CAMEL CORPS OUT FOR THE MURDERERS

Photographs by Dr. S. M. Rinehart

TWO DASHING OFFICERS

"PAVED THE STREETS OF BABYLON WITH PITCH FROM THE WELLS OF HITT"

Photograph by Dr. S. M. Rinehart

OUR BOATMAN HIDING FROM THE EVIL EYE OF THE CAMERA

our two suit-cases in the customs house, and in due time to settle ourselves into a waiting train on the other side, while innumerable gentlemen we had never seen before clamored outside the windows for emolument. I fancied the engineer and fireman of the train were among those present, but perhaps I am doing them an injustice.

We closed the windows, locked the compartment door and looked about us. Three seats on either side, the lifting of the arms provided us with two narrow, slippery leather divans, and on these couches, scantily provided with bedding, we spent the night.

But who could complain? We were passing through that desert where, along the very route we followed, the British army had struggled forward toward Jerusalem. No train then; no railroad. Thousands of camels, wagon transports, guns and ammunition, troops and supply trains, they made their desperate advance. Men and animals died like flies, thirst dried and heat burned them. They sank to the knees in the deep sand, and sometimes stuck there, until some genius conceived the idea of making a road by laying down meshed or chicken wire, as we know it, and on this humble terrain they were able to advance! And another genius built a pumping station at Kantara, and through a great pipe line across the Canal and the desert carried the sweet waters of

Egypt to the troops in that forlorn and waterless land.

American pipe it was, too, that line which went forward with the British army, pipe sent over for some commercial purpose by the Standard Oil Company, and now exalted. The water was first cleared with alum, settled in tanks and then chlorinated. As the pipe line grew in length and the advance proceeded, new pumping stations were built in the desert, until seventeen of them were scattered along the line.

"When the Nile flows into Palestine, then shall the prophet from the west drive the Turk from Jerusalem." Old Arab proverb.

We got some sleep, now and then arising to gather the bedding from the floor, and at five in the morning we were put off at Ludd. We had no notice; we were summarily ejected with most of our clothing in our arms. And in the cold gray dawn we finished our dressing on the station platform and waited for a train to Haifa, while the one we had left remained twenty-five minutes longer.

We had traveled in one night over the desert which it had taken the British army a year to cross.

Owing to a rule of long standing in the family that nothing said before breakfast is to count, we remained in a state of armed neutrality until our

train arrived. And if we contemplated those strange early days of the railroad before us, with Egyptian labor troops pushing the line forward a mile a day and English locomotives with English engineers calmly startling the natives into hysteria, it was in silence. Then——

Ham and eggs in a dining car, civilization in a strip the exact width of the train! And on either side the unchanged country and its unchanged inhabitants! The plows they are using in their tiny fields are of wood, without any metal whatever, their clothing is scant and thin, their camels, oxen and horses look ill-nourished and badly cared for.

But a new era has come. The Turk has gone, after enriching the sultan and his favorites for four hundred years. It is no longer necessary to cut down the trees to avoid paying the tax on them. The British military roads now serve peaceful purposes, and after all these centuries of water sold from dirty sheep-skins, or caught on the flat roofs and then stored in stagnant tanks in cellars, the cities have a water supply.

CHAPTER II

THERE was no railroad from Haifa in Palestine to Beirut in Syria. I don't know why we had thought there would be, and the fact came as a shock. We engaged a car, with a chauffeur who spoke only Arabic and a guide who slept all the way, and made the trip in six hours.

Later on we learned that we had passed through Acre, where Richard I landed on the third crusade, through Tyre and Sidon. But our guide slept cozily on the front seat, and as I had left my Baedeker in the train during our hurried exit, history passed us by unnoted. At dusk we drew into Beirut and went to the Grand Hotel.

That evening, Saturday, I wrote a few final words to the family to be delivered in case of accident, and at five o'clock of a Monday morning a large and handsome Panhard car stopped in front of our hotel. It was brand new, luxurious and—one hoped—more or less bullet proof. Into it we packed our two suitcases, the Head's camera, the extra fur coat which Lord Allenby had mistakenly assured me I would need, and ourselves. Also a large and heavy book in French, relating to India and presented us by the smiling and

genial host of the hotel, who apparently labored under the impression that that was where we were going.

This latter we placed in the netting overhead, from which at every bump it dropped onto one or the other of us. And bumps were numerous. So numerous, indeed, that on the seven-hundred-mile return journey in a Dodge car, holding himself down to save himself from a fractured skull, the Head wore the seat entirely out of his trousers, and was forced to alight in Beirut on a broiling hot day, clad in a heavy overcoat.

"I know now why they call it a Dodge car," he said ruefully, surveying the sharp-angled brace above his head. "I've done nothing but dodge in the darned thing."

But the Dodge was better than the Panhard, as it turned out.

By five-thirty A.M. a Swiss gentleman with an agreeable smile and no conversation had settled himself beside the driver; we had picked up Madame, a delightful and polyglot person who changed from German to French, from English to Arabic without, probably, splitting an infinitive; the Captain, who is an official of the company, had placed a revolver in a side pocket of the car and crawled in beside it, and we were off.

Fine macadam roads climbed the great Lebanon range, with beautiful Mount Hermon covered

with snow. From the top of that mountain wall, when we could turn our eyes from the twisting road that clung along the cliffs, we could see Beirut far below, lying amid its olive trees on the blue Mediterranean. A little city, yet famous throughout the east for the great American University we have built there; perhaps the single greatest opportunity for self-improvement the entire East possesses, and certainly the most far-reaching in its influence.

In their own section were the pitiful huts and refuges of thirty thousand Armenians, dumped on this little city to die or survive, as the case may be. A few boards, a bit of tar paper, and they have made a house. They have worked, they have starved and died, but they have never begged. Not a likable people, a detested people indeed by those who have had to deal with them in the past, let this one virtue recommend them now.

We grew acquainted. On top of the mountain wall we stopped and had hot coffee, and grew better acquainted. The company was doing well. British officials could get out now in three days instead of three weeks on their home leave.

The Bedouins? Well, they were Bedouins; one never knew about them. There were bad people among them, but so were there bad people everywhere. Major Imbrie had gone in by this route

safely enough; it was in Teheran he had been killed.

But bit by bit, here and there, I got the story of the French vice-consul's wife, and a sad story it was.

The murdered woman, with her husband and baby, had been en route from Bagdad to Beirut. They had crossed the Wadi Harun, that treacherous creek in which later the Panhard was to stick, and a few miles beyond it out of the darkness bullets began to rain on the car. Radiator and tires were punctured and the car came to a stop. After it had stopped the shooting continued, aimed at the chauffeur, but it was the woman beside him who was struck and mortally wounded.

The Bedouins paid no attention to her. As she lay dying they rifled the car and the travelers, taking also the vice-consul's dispatch bags, which were found the next day slit open and their papers scattered about. They departed, and the second car of the convoy found this small tragedy of the desert waiting them, a dead woman who still clutched in her hand her baby's shoes, a crying, hungry child and a distracted father.

They got to the ruins of Palmyra, and the Arab village built within the ancient Temple of the Sun. And from there the word went out. Immediately the strong hand of the British government took

hold. It sent out its camel police in force, and from the guilty tribe it took twelve hostages, to be hanged unless the murderers were surrendered.

And things had reached this pass as we started out. Later on we were to pick up this story again, on our way over to see four suspicious Bedouin figures watching us, and further along to meet the camel corps and make our report. And on our journey back, strangely enough, we were to happen on the end of the story, to come face to face with it.

CHAPTER III

Damascus at ten o'clock, coffee, the customs house, picking up the French mail for Bagdad, and off again. We had been joined by a small truck, or camionette, and another passenger car, a pilot car, carrying a guard with a rifle, and our convoy was now complete.

Through the center of the town, rather like a modern French city, the convoy moved, and then into a different world; a world of narrow twisting streets, with camels moving aside to let our car through, and incredibly tiny shops, where the silver and inlay workers squatted over their work, and hideous western trade goods competed with the native stuffs.

Narrow corners, which the Panhard negotiated with difficulty, scowls from the natives as our horn cleared the way, and we were out on the great plain which a few miles beyond becomes the Syrian desert.

It grew hot. While we moved it was bearable, but when for any purpose the car halted, the heat was intolerable. We stopped for water for the cars in an Arab village, stuck at a street corner the Panhard could not turn, backed and tried an-

other way, and were at last on the desert itself. It stretched away to the east of us, five hundred miles of it, to the Valley of the Rivers, where the Euphrates pours down its yellow flood and Bagdad sits alone beside the Tigris. And can sit there alone forever, for all of me.

The desert again. But this time a different desert. A hard-packed arid desert, not of sand but of what resembled the adobe of our western states. A little rain and it becomes impassable; the feet slip in the gumbo, car wheels turn helplessly, as we were to learn later on, and even the Bedouins, watching their herds of camels, sheep, and goats, remain where they are until the sun has dried the earth again.

During the rains, an almost imperceptible grass grows, and on this the vast herds feed. The tribes follow this grass, and as the rains occur at different seasons east and west, are always on the move. A week, two weeks, and once more the tents are struck, the baggage camels packed, and they travel on.

All day long we passed through these herds. Thousands of camels, fat-tailed sheep and goats grazed under the care of Bedouins who moved up near the track—there was no road—to see us pass. Now and then we passed a camp, savage dogs barking and children running. But toward evening we seemed to have left all life behind us; we

were in an empty world. As darkness closed down the lights of the car appeared to make a path through a dense black forest, and so overwhelming was this feeling that at last I spoke of it.

Madame moved in her seat.

"Strange!" she said. "I feel it too. An unfriendly forest."

Even the Swiss gentleman acknowledged to the same sensation, and it persisted during all the hours of darkness over and back. And as the hours progressed, to this and my fatigue was added a certain uneasiness. Details of the attack the week before rose in my mind, and on either side closed in that imaginary forest, concealing who knew what of the sinister and the wicked.

However, at ten o'clock that night we drove safely into the ruins of Palmyra, and under what is left of the Temple of the Sun found the rest house, and clean beds. Perhaps by this time the company's new building is ready, and if so something of the picturesqueness of our arrival will be lost.

The rest house, when we were there, was the house of the local Sheik. Around a small courtyard were its one-story buildings, and when we had driven in the gates were closed and fastened. We had a quick view of the men of the Sheik's family, gathered on the earthen floor of a room to the right and drinking the eternal thick black

coffee, and of a pet sheep in the kitchen where our meal was being prepared. A lantern moved about the court-yard, dark when our car lights were extinguished, and a sense of the eeriness of our situation began to make itself felt.

Beds we had, clean and comfortable, and water to wash with, but of other toilet facilities as we know them there were none whatever. The lantern shone on strange bearded faces and figures clothed in swinging Arab garb. And outside our shelter, their huts filling the Temple of the Sun whose ruined façade lifted itself above us in the starlight, was a barbarous and not too friendly population, probably ready to kill or to let alone at the raising of their Sheik's finger.

However, as it turned out, we were not so far from the strong arm of authority as we had believed. We had no more than begun to hunt our soap and tooth brushes than an Arab appeared at our door and summoned us. We were to go somewhere.

We endeavored to explain. We were tired and hungry and dirty. We were not in condition to pay calls. Another time we would take great pleasure, and so on. But in the end we had to go.

It was hair-raising. Behind him in the darkness we slid and stumbled, groped and clutched. And at last we were in a small building, with a French officer in uniform behind a real desk! At

the moment I could have kissed him. Later on——

We had no *vise* for Irak! We had so many *vises* on our passports that the space had run out; we were *vised* for every British possession, including the Prince of Wales' ranch at Calgary and the Albert Memorial, but somebody had slipped up on Irak. Maybe they had never heard of it. I am sure we never had, until recently.

The matter seemed serious. In vain we pleaded. The officer turned to a gorgeous individual in a white silk turban and brilliant aba, with his eyes heavily made up with kohl, and this personage eyed us and evidently considered us highly suspicious.

At this *impasse* I remembered our credentials from the Department of Labor. At a White House reception Secretary Davis had asked us if we would care to go on our trip as special agents of the department, gathering such information as came to hand, and on our eagerly agreeing, had sent us various papers. So various, indeed, that the Head had sent him a postcard of our camel caravan from Egypt, saying on it that: "The rear camel is laden with the credentials of the Department of Labor!"

These we now produced, but if the French officer weakened the handsome Bedouin remained obdurate. I have a feeling that if I had had a

chance to wash my face and powder my nose I might have influenced him, but as things were it looked hopeless.

In the end, however, we paid some twenty dollars, the French officer poured some water into the drying ink, signed on the dotted line, and doubtfully let us go.

CHAPTER IV

LATE that evening the Sheik himself came to see us. Somewhere in a compound beyond us were the eight members of his harem and his twenty-two children; also from a later glimpse I had of the place some of his sheep and his goats, his dogs and his horses. But he came alone.

A fine, benevolent old figure he was, rather like a patriarch of Biblical times. And with some of the ancient weaknesses, too. He regards his family with a certain bored philosophy, but in order to see him really brighten one must inquire into his past. Then, ah, then he draws himself up. Once more he is the handsome young Sheik, running away from his wives and his children, his sheep, his goats and his camels, with a beautiful lady from Paris.

His eyes snap. He is ready for any lurid detail. He shows the gold watch he got there, and that it still goes. Happy days, great days, wonderful days! But he says nothing of that time six years later when he returned to his desert again, riding gravely on a camel, leading another on which were packed the *buhl* chest, the gilt mirrors,

the silver-mounted pistol, which still mark his ancient conquest.

Later we slept in his room. The *buhl* chest, inlaid with mother of pearl, was warped and cracked with neglect, its color dimmed with dirt. The antique gilt mirrors had suffered the same fate, and were hung some seven feet from the ground! Only the pistol, in its worn scabbard, gleamed with care and with use.

His eldest son, showing me to this chamber, pointed to it proudly.

"The weapon of my father," he said. "From Paris."

For the benefit of those romantic ladies who dream of being abducted by a Sheik, I made a careful record of the contents of that room.

Picture, then, a small room opening onto a second and even dirtier court-yard, with two windows, which do not open. On leaving the door wide, a large and bony white horse attempts to enter, and is repulsed with difficulty. Two brilliant saddle cloths hang on the wall, and below them a canvas sack contains the other camel trappings. A handsome sword, inlaid with silver and in a silver scabbard, decorates another wall, between two small imitation Oriental rugs, made probably in Manchester, England. The room has been swept for visitors, but not dusted, and on shelves over the beds, thick with the dirt of ages,

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BOGGED DOWN IN THE DESERT

THE ARABS HAVE SQUATTED IN THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN

are a large white soup tureen, a broken mustache cup painted with flowers, an empty tin box marked "ginger biscuits," a litter of cheap and unwashed glassware, and an ancient carbine.

With the mirrors and the chest of drawers, and the beds and washstand placed there by the company, this completed a room undoubtedly the boast of the entire region.

This is not the place to discuss Zenobia and her dream of empire. Dawn the next morning showed us the ruins of her magnificent capital, through which the old caravan routes from Persia traveled to the sea. Not even then could the country have been the desert it now is. Trees grew and gardens flourished here, and with wells and irrigation would do so again.

But now it is only a desert plain, with an entire village of wretched Arab huts in the ruins of the Temple of the Sun, and mile-long rows of great Corinthian columns, the roofs they once upheld vanished, the people they sheltered forgotten.

In the brilliant sunlight of the dawn the Arabs, squatters and vandals, emerged from the Temple and filled the dead columned streets with noisy life. Their women went for water, their camels filed along. And in a tiny room beneath the Temple wall a school had opened, and children carrying quaint pens and ink pots showed us their copy books, written in Arabic!

Dawn, I have said, showed us these things. But only dawn. Almost before it was fully light we were off again on the long run between Palmyra and Quebeissa. We had picked up another passenger in Palmyra, a British official bound for Bagdad, and the Captain and his comforting revolver had moved to the car ahead.

CHAPTER V

THE heart of the desert now. As the sun rose higher the heat became intense. My fur coat lay on the floor under my feet; the water in the canteens was tepid and horrible; mirages of cool lakes and tiny islands formed in front of us only to dissolve into the dry and empty earth; and we sank into a lethargy from which we roused only at the sound of shooting ahead.

It turned out, however, that the Captain was firing at a wolf, and our hearts went back to normal again.

Seated on the running board of the car for shade, at noon we ate what remained of our dried sandwiches from Beirut and drank our hot tea. My interest in Bagdad had died of a sunstroke, and even a polite battle between Madame, who was a feminist, and the Englishman, who was not, could not cheer me. The Arabs could have Arabia, for all of me, and the English could have Bagdad. So far as I was concerned, the whole darned East could get along without me from then on. The country was empty. Not even camels now relieved the monotony. Here and there a skeleton lay, for unlike the Sahara this

desert does not bury its dead beneath kindly drifting sands. But of life there was little or none. Three hundred miles we must have gone that day, the track now twisting among bare low hills, again speeding straight across some great flat plain.

Sometime after lunch, however, we did see life. Four Bedouins, without the excuse of herds to guard, were standing to our left a quarter of a mile away, quietly watching us. And as four Bedouins had constituted the party which had attacked the car the week before, the fact was suspicious.

They made no hostile move, however. They merely stood and watched us with a sort of concentrated intensity, and once again monotony seized us, and fatigue, and almost despair.

The track varied. Sometimes there was no track, indeed, and the car flew over the smooth hard ground to some distant landmark we did not know. Again it wound up low dune-like hills, up which we bumped and down which we slid, while the book on India descended on us and the brakes smoked. Always we were riding against time; pushing on the good stretches, watching the hours. For this remarkable service not only performs a miracle; it does so twice a week, on scheduled time.

At three in the afternoon we were brought to a sudden halt. Half asleep, we roused to see the

track barred by Arabs on camels, and heavily armed.

"Whash the matter?" said the Head drowsily.

"We're held up," I said in a dreadful tone.

Now I have always maintained that in a crisis I can keep my head. Therefore I at once proceeded carefully to tuck our last remaining bottle of mineral water under the seat cushion behind me, and the Head, I believe, grabbed the camera. After the excitement was over I found my purse on the car floor, but we did not find the mineral water until we no longer needed it.

After all this, it turned out to be the Arab desert patrol, out on their camels after the murderers. The line on the company's circulars, to the effect that each ticket carried a thousand pounds, or five thousand dollars, of insurance could be again forgotten.

These were friends.

They made a dramatic picture. Perhaps forty camels and their riders, in the picturesque dress of the Arab police, fully armed and grimly intent on their errand, they stopped only long enough to gather our information, and then to push on again. They had come a long distance already, and they were to be a week or so longer in the desert before they found their men. After that there was to be the long journey back on their slow-moving animals. But their officers were alert and jaunty.

Without loss of time they re-mounted their camels and moved on in the direction from which we had come.

The sun had set when we reached the first running water since leaving Damascus. During the spring rains the Wadi Harun is a considerable stream, but it had dwindled to a small creek in the center of a wide river-bed. However, the Panhard was a heavy car, making its first trip.

Would it get through? Or would it not?

It would not. Dashingly it flew at the stream, only to come to an ignominious stop in the center and there to proceed to sink. We crawled out. One other car had got through and had blithely gone on, and we were bogged down in the heart of the desert! Arab police or no Arab police, I didn't like it. There were too many hills around that wadi, for one thing, and it was only ten miles or so from the scene of the outrage for another.

The second car came up. It carried spades for such emergencies, and the digging began. One hour, two hours, they dug. Twilight fell; the cold evening wind began to blow; we had breakfasted at dawn and lunched lightly at eleven; and the khan at Quebeissa and dinner were still a hundred miles away.

Disconsolately Madame and I hunted a high dry place, and there sat on a rock in gloomy silence.

Late that night we drove into a great khan, and the high solid gates were closed and barred behind us. Luxury now; the company rest house, with hot and cold water, good beds and good food. Even a phonograph!

Over all was the heavy scent of the bitumen wells at Hitt, near by, those very well from which Noah secured the pitch for the Ark and which once paved the great Main Street of Babylon, a hundred feet wide and miles in length; which still covers the reed foundations of those strange Tigris and Euphrates river boats, the circular, tub-like goofas.

During the night I wakened to an unearthly shrieking outside our walls, a hyena, perhaps. But all the animals of the aforementioned Ark might have howled that night outside the walls of the khan, without seriously disturbing me.

I turned over and went to sleep again.

CHAPTER VI

LATE the next afternoon we reached Bagdad. We had crossed the Euphrates on its pontoon bridge, had Arab tea and broiled meat cakes cooked on a charcoal grill in the open street of Felluja, at the end of the bridge, and at last the golden domes and minarets of the Mosque at Kadhimain came into view.

Bagdad!

Apparently millions of palm trees; a road congested with traffic of all sorts; a bridge toll-keeper at a table beside the road, the toll paid in Indian money, for we were in the land of the rupee now; then the pontoon bridge itself, and under it the Tigris—that was our first view of Bagdad.

We drove down the main street, which British imagination running riot has named New Street, turned into a dirty court-yard, stiffly got out of the Panhard, left our luggage for the customs officers, and started for our hotel.

I wanted a hot tub bath; in fact, during the entire time I was in Bagdad I wanted a hot tub bath. For I never got it.

In the early days of the British occupancy the Bagdadi who owns Maude's Hotel had, in a burst

of enthusiasm, put in two bathrooms. But he is an Oriental, and so the only bursts which have lasted are the bursts in his pipes. On the one occasion when I made a really determined effort to brave the flooded floor, the dirt and the odors of a bathroom opening off the court-yard, I walked in on a British officer in *puris naturalibus,* and was compelled to retreat hastily.

Maude's Hotel! I think about it sometimes, its untidy dining room, with sparrows stealing the food from the tables and the crumbs from under one's very feet; with the dishes being washed on the floor of the court-yard in filthy greasy water; with the refuse, when the British Sanitary officer's back is turned, thrown out to decay on the river bank under our windows; with its hard cotton pillows, which were not pillows in our sense of the word at all, but head-rests of some sort of lumpy felt; and its menu, before me as I write, of greasy "soup, mixed grilled, onion and boiled potatoes, Irish stew and vermicelli pudding."

Heat, smells, flies and mosquitoes came indiscriminately through our open windows. An untidy servant waited on us during the day and at night, poor wretch, lay down on the bare boards outside our door to sleep. Two high flights of outside wooden stairs led from the court-yard to our bedroom, and to reach them from the street we traversed another court-yard, went down steep

stone steps past the bar, up more and steeper steps into the rear court, and then began to climb again.

And the room, when we reached it, was certainly not worth the effort.

If, as some British writer has recently said, agriculture and tourists are the only reliable futures of Mesopotamia, somebody should take mine host of Maude's Hotel out and drown him in the Tigris.

But British writers are mostly very pessimistic about Bagdad, and indeed about all of Mesopotamia. More than pessimistic; they are bitter. They seem to accuse their home government of everything from straight weakness and criminal negligence to malfeasance in office, and at the least they claim that the British administration of Mesopotamia has been conspicuously lacking in what the consular reports name as one of the export products of the country; *i.e.,* intestines!

Curious, to think that Great Britain has become the greatest Moslem power in the world. Curious, too, to remember the part the proposed Bagdad Railway played in the war, the long scheming and ambitions of Germany and England toward Mesopotamia, and then to find men like Herbert Asquith calling it the worst investment Great Britain ever made.

What did they expect? To undo in six years the neglect and downright destruction of five

hundred years? It has taken them forty years in Egypt, and longer in India. The country is there, the bread basket of the world under irrigation. Under German pressure, for a few years before the war the Turks were trying to improve its economic condition. Now the British have it under mandate, the greatest single gain in control of rich territory made by any nation in the war, and because it does not pay immediate dividends there has been an outcry.

So the Garden of Eden has lost in popularity since the early days, when Adam and Eve had to be driven out by main force. Under irrigation the Land Between the Rivers can be another paradise; its oil resources are vast and already under development; the labor of an indolent population is a problem, but it will be solved in time. Labor is cheap, from twelve to twenty-four cents a day, and is worth just about that amount. But the exploitation of the country for commercial profit will not be a matter of a day or a year. In twenty years, under proper administration, Great Britain, if she remains there, could probably afford to throw away India and let go in Egypt. She would still be rich.

The Garden of Eden! At Kurna, where the Tigris and Euphrates unite, there is an old tree, locally known as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Naturally the British Tommies took

to having their pictures taken in it, and finally this was forbidden. But they persisted, and at last three of them were court-martialed, the indictment gravely reading, "for breaking a limb from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, in the Garden of Eden"!

CHAPTER VII

We were buying a small silk rug. The dealer in the back street wanted nine hundred rupees, and I turned to the Head.

"How much is that in dollars?"

He made a quick calculation, and reported that it was something over three hundred dollars. I offered two hundred, but nothing happened, then two hundred and fifty. The dealer sadly shook his head and put the rug away.

"I get many other rugs," he said, "but only one of him. I cannot."

Finally we compromised on two hundred and seventy-five dollars, and carried the rug away with us for fear he would change his mind. And the next day we found that, at the rate of exchange for the rupee, his original asking price had only been two hundred and forty dollars.

Every now and then I ask myself if I really travel to learn and to see, or travel to shop. Only the other day I caught myself saying, in a very casual voice: "Oh yes. We picked that up in Bagdad." And waiting for the caller to say:

"Bagdad! Have you *been* to Bagdad?"

I am still trying to find a place in the house

where my blue enameled Damascus tray won't stick out like a sore thumb; in the long Georgian drawing room the low carved Turkish table with a brass brazier on it looks as though the moving men had put it there and forgotten to take it away; and of the porcelain figure of a dancing Korean girl, which the Head carried painfully under his arm on and off ships and finally home, I saw a duplicate the day we landed in the window of a New York shop.

We shopped in Bagdad. There was nothing else to do, except to go to the movies! We tried that only once, sitting in the box of a small and almost empty theater, and seeing dimly projected without music an ancient French picture. As in all the Orient, the titles were not in one language but in three. They ran to the left of the picture on a separate roll, and as the action of the two machines was not always synchronous, the result was pure confusion.

But what strange ideas of our civilization these Oriental peoples must receive! Of shootings and seductions, of half-clothed women, in a land still of secluded ones. The hoots and derisive laughter at the suggestive situations they are so quick to grasp, has something contemptuous in it. As if they said: "And this is Christian civilization! Wherein is it better than ours? Or so good."

The movies then, and the bazaars were all we

had. There were no windows from which to view the street, that one wide street blasted by the Turks when the war began, so that they could get their motor transport through. They simply blew up the buildings, letting the ruins stand.

The only view to be obtained was from a stone bench inside the entrance arch. There for hours I sat, watching that strange procession which is Bagdad: Kurdish coolies, in rags and skins; Jewish women in brilliant brocades of orange and rose and green and blue, draping body and head, the face concealed by what looked like the wide end of a wire fly-swatter; crippled and blind men; dandies carrying and fingering their prayer beads, people of all nations and all creeds.

Down the street to the right was the American consulate, its rear verandah overlooking the Tigris. So great is the heat that in summer the executive offices are moved into the basement, but the business of America must be looked after, her occasional tourists speeded on their way. What thought do we ever give these people, serving us in exile? Just beyond us, in Teheran in Persia, our Consul there, Major Imbrie, was recently murdered, but it required his death to let most of us know he was there.

In heat and in cold, often under impossible health conditions and in hostile surroundings, these remote agents of our government live and

frequently die, not only unhonored and unsung, but unknown.

Along the street were shops and coffee houses. Here and there was a native hotel, its upper windows jealously screened; the women's quarters. The shops were dull and uninteresting, but a narrow by-street was the Street of the Silver Workers. Here they squatted over their small furnaces and anvils, and made by hand their tiny cups and coffee pots, and their cigarette cases inlaid with antimony.

But it was in the great bazaar that we saw native life at its noisiest, its dirtiest, and its most pitiful. Its streets only paths, so crowded in places that two people can pass with difficulty, on either side each merchant sits cross-legged within a tiny cubicle, his small stock spread before him. Roofed in as it is, the air is bad, the heat atrocious. The earth underfoot is dank with the accumulated filth of ages.

Through the crowd goes a coolie, bent double and carrying on his back a structural steel beam! It is an I-beam, possibly fifteen feet long, or even more. His feet wide apart, his face pale, his breath coming in gasps he staggers along. They do not live long, these men.

In the Street of the Scribes, the letter writers are at work, squatted behind low tables. Here is a veiled woman, dictating in a low voice; there a

THE MURDERERS AND BROWN

THE TOMB OF EZRA

family group, arguing noisily, while the scribe waits stoically. But they are learning to write in Bagdad. I visited a night school there, where the youngest pupil was a boy of eight and the oldest a bearded patriarch of seventy.

The jewelers have a street of their own in the bazaar. Their stocks of rubies and sapphires lie out in common white saucers, and their antique lapidaries' wheels are as they were five thousand years ago. The stones are sold by the caret, and are astonishingly cheap.

An incredible din draws us to the Street of the Metal Workers, and we find the workers in tin, in iron, in brass and in copper. Their forge fires blaze, throwing into relief their half-naked bodies, their muscular arms. All their work is done by hand; their hammers whang and white-hot metal glows. Outside are hanging their finished wares. I buy two brass trays and carry them along.

I have them now. They are sitting upright on top of the book shelves in the library, and every time a door slams they fall down. Besides, they don't belong in the house. None of the stuff I bought really belongs except the rug. The dogs like to sleep on that.

CHAPTER VIII

THERE came a day when heat, sparrows, flies, mosquitoes and scents from the river bank were too much for us; when the servants, eating broken food in the court-yard, revolted us; and when my high clean bed at Beirut, into which I climbed from a chair, and the modest bathroom with no leaking pipes and Englishmen in *puris naturalibus,* began to call us with a loud clear voice.

So once more we set out, in a Dodge car this time, driven by a temperamental Syrian. More people apparently wished to leave Bagdad than to get there, and so there were two cars of passengers, and a Russian gentleman and an Armenian lady in the truck.

The Russian gentleman had preëmpted the seat beside the driver, so the Armenian lady sat in the back, on a trunk.

The silent Swiss was returning also; he and the Head had the rear seat of the car, along with the camera, dressing cases, extra wraps, bottles of mineral water, bags of fruit and boxes of crackers. I was beside the driver.

At the last moment, however, came Brown, the man at whom the shots had been fired the night

of the hold-up and now to be our escort and guard. He too went into the rear seat, and in this fashion did we start back on our three days' journey across the desert again.

It was a gray and windy day. The Tigris, on which we had so gayly floated in our goofa, was drab and swollen under the bridge as we crossed it. No drafts of inflated sheep-skins, later to be deflated and packed up-stream again on horse or donkey back, floated on its angry surface; no fishermen flung their nets from their round tub-like boats.

The palms bent to the gale, and the dust of a thousand years stung our faces and filled our eyes. Even the golden domes of the Mosque at Kadhimain were tarnished; Kadhimain the fanatic city, where we had gone under guard the day before Ramadan, and where I had held my skirt back from the vegetable stalls, for fear of a riot should the touch of an infidel pollute the food.

And when we emerged into the desert it was worse. The dry soil rose in clouds, and the wind gave it a cutting quality I had not foreseen. That night, back in the khan at Quebeissa again, I found that a large portion of the hair below my hat had been neatly sheared off by the flying sand!

Of conversation there was none. All of us were watching the track, along which our Mahmoud

Ali Hassan drove us at a blood-curdling rate. The speedometer went to ninety, a hundred kilometers, and stayed there. I clutched my hat, the Head held to the top brace with one hand and a side brace with the other. And for three days, more or less, I clutched and the Head held on, across the desert once more.

It was on the second day that we sighted the Camel Corps again. We had crossed the Wadi Harun without trouble, and were within a half mile of the scene of the murder when along the horizon to the right a camel came into sight. It was followed by another and another, until in a long row the entire corps was silhouetted against the sky.

We turned off the track, and across the hard desert drove toward it. Politely its officers halted the line, and, the camels having knelt, dismounted.

They had found the murderers, or at least three of them. What is more, they were there, on camels and securely handcuffed. And with us was Brown!

At our request they took the men from their animals and brought them forward. Like all Arabs they feared the evil eye, and one could hardly be persuaded to take his hand from his face. But he finally did so, and the Head secured his picture.

It was a dramatic meeting, there in the heart of

the Syrian desert in northern Arabia, of the three wretches protesting their innocence, and the impassive Englishman they had tried to kill.

I do not even know if Brown was able to identify them. He was not talkative, perhaps by instruction from Headquarters. But they had been turned over by their tribe as the guilty ones, and the justice of the desert is quick and sure.

Strange times indeed have come to the Arabs. Their desert no longer hides them. From the air great machines carrying men can pry out their hidden refuges, and what are their camels against the unbelievers' motor cars? And now come the British and the French, and for the mere matter of a killing take hostages so that their very tribesmen turn betrayers.

The Black Camel kneels before their tents indeed.

At a word from the officers the murderers were taken back to their camels. The soldiers swung into their saddles, the animals rose, and at a brisk trot the imposing procession moved on. Equally impassive, Brown got into the Dodge and we too started off. He never referred to the matter again.

It rained the next day. Not a real rain, but a small fine drizzle which was hardly a rain at all. It was enough, however! The morning of the third day saw us west of the ruins of Palmyra

and wallowing in apparently bottomless mud. Some place, I have no idea just where, we found the Panhard of luxurious memory, abandoned and deserted, and digging it out we brought it along.

We took the Armenian lady from her trunk in the truck and placed her on its velvet cushions, and it is not my fault that the Russian gentleman got in too. But their comfort was only for a brief period. Two hours later we struck a deep wash. The Dodge, by digging and pushing, got out in due time, but the Panhard stayed.

We sat on a bank and watched the Armenian lady, who for some reason wore black velvet slippers, get out into the deep muck and wade ashore. We mildly cheered when the Russian had to do the same thing. But mainly we just sat. Sat for hours, while time went by, and stray dogs from an Arab village near by begged for food, and two cut-throats with old muzzle-loading rifles and long braids of hair kept toying with their guns in a manner I considered highly suggestive.

A French army supply train came along, fourteen wagons covered like our old prairie schooners, and each drawn by three horses. It was bound for some distant desert post, but it did not attempt to pass. Nor to help!

Our water was gone, and of our food only two oranges remained. The sun came out, and while

it was drying the mud it was boiling us. Only a hundred and fifty miles or so to the west of us lay Damascus, and food and civilization—strange to think of Damascus as civilization—but they seemed a million miles away.

And then the Panhard moved.

Late that night I crawled up the high steps of the Grand Hotel de Boisseul in Beirut. I had two brass trays under my arm, and the Head carried the rug.

I needed a bath. I needed everything. A tray of food was brought to the room, but I could not even eat.

Thankfully but stiffly I pushed a chair beside my high bed, mounted it and crawled in. During the night the wind blew the brass trays down and probably roused the entire hotel, but I never even heard them fall.

BOOK III

SUMMER COMES TO THE RANCH

CHAPTER I

News Item: Mrs. Rinehart has gone to her ranch in Wyoming to spend the summer.

IT has a fine sound, that. I like to read it; I can see myself getting off the train and being whisked to my broad ancestral acres. And later, in riding garb, calling for my horse and going over the property; looking at the ditches, inspecting the beef and dairy herds, then conferring with my foreman and the corral boss, going over the books and generally taking stock.

But, as it happens, I haven't any ranch. All I have out here, in this country where men are men and all Easterners are dudes, is a two-roomed log cabin. And even this only by grace of repeated occupancy, not ownership.

It is a very little log cabin indeed. Not enough, one would think, to draw one all the way from the Eastern seaboard. And yet, from the time I cross the Mississippi I begin to feel the preliminary welcome it extends. The very atmosphere of

the train service commences to change at Omaha; the conductors cease to be haughty persons who do heavy bookkeeping in unoccupied drawing rooms, and by the time we start up north are pointing out a herd of antelope which has wintered near the line. The dining-car stewards wander in to say that they have picked up some fresh mountain trout. And in the observation car men with broad-brimmed hats break through the frozen reserve of the Easterners, and conversation becomes general.

For the Northwest still believes that proud statement of our Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal. We are moving, at something like twenty miles an hour, into the land of the open door and the homely greeting:

"Tie up your horse, stranger, and come right in."

The cabin is unchanged, after two years of absence.

The horseshoe is still fastened to the front door in the proper position, which is of course open side up, so the luck cannot run out. It is loose-hung to two staples, and is our door knocker; not, naturally, that one really requires a door knocker, because in this country it is the custom to walk in and then raise your voice in a sort of view halloo. Nor is the interior altered save in one particular, which I shall come to later on.

This is a great relief. I had had a terrible fear, for instance, that they might have put a new floor in the porch, and thus shut away forever the treasure-trove beneath it. The lost knitting needles which had slipped between its weathered boards; the letters, which one had no time to answer anyhow; the trout flies and fishhooks, the scissors and nail files, the penknives and camera pictures. And especially the ground squirrels that came up for crumbs, and the small baby garter snakes that once in a while crept up to sun themselves on the warm old planks.

But no, there has been no change, outside or in. Except the one which I am coming to later. I am not sure I like it. It reeks of civilization. No, not a bathroom. The pipe in the ceiling of the side porch is still there, ready at the turning of a lever to deluge us with icy water from the creek; even the battered sail cloth still hangs there, an inadequate protection at the best of times, and on windy days none at all unless weighted down with heavy stones. No, not a bathroom.

The creek still roars beneath the sleeping-porch at the rear, after its fall of three thousand feet down the mountain; the steep path still leads to it, down which once, brought here to recover from a grave operation, I crawled feebly on my hands and knees with a fishing rod in my teeth, to surprise

the family almost into hysterics later by producing a small limp trout.

The mountains still rise beyond it, so near that I can gaze up and watch the deer overhead come down from the snow mountains of the interior of the range for the spring grass of the upland meadows.

Mine, too, for the looking are the straight cliffs, towering thousands of feet in the air; the more gradual slopes, up which mount evergreen forests, thick at the base, but gradually attenuating until at last only a few venturesome firs have climbed to the upper reaches; the thin and temporary cascades, sunborn children of the winter snow which still lies stirrup-deep at the top; and the cañon, down which in a series of leaps dashes the creek.

A two-roomed log cabin! What nonsense! A kingdom. An empire.

Still, one must have the cabin.

First, the living room. It is perhaps thirty by fifteen feet. The logs of the cottage form its walls, but where on the outside the bark has been left on, here they are roughly skinned and the interstices filled with mortar. It extends across the entire front of the cottage, and opposite the door is a great fireplace, built of field stone.

In this all day long burns a huge fire, for the spring days are still cold, although the sun is

brilliant. But so large is the fireplace that most of the heat escapes up the flue. Sometimes I think the only way to utilize that fire would be to climb the roof and sit on the chimney. However, it has its uses; a white-enameled pitcher sits on the hearth, an automatic water-heating plant of my own devising, in which I have an inventor's pride. Of course there is hot water—hot water and bathrooms—at the main ranch house, but it is the essence of being a cabin dweller to be on one's own.

There is an active pioneer streak in most of us; we number our ancestral log cabins as the overlords of the Old World list their family castles, and that individual is clearly *parvenu* who does not thrill at the sight of one. He has no family and no traditions.

The living room has not been changed; it still contains the wicker rocking-chair of tender memory, and the solid-oak-and-leather one which has been here from time immemorial, and which seems so magnificent in its humble surroundings. On the table is still that piece of petrified wood which has been my paper weight for many a bit of writing, and the log bookshelves are still filled with their miscellaneous collection of books; Vergil's Æneid, a chemistry, and a 1918 Social Register among them! Rag rugs on the floor, a log wood box in the corner, a framed photograph of Sitting Bull and one of Wolf Creek Falls on the

wall, and hung about on various nails our fancy bridles, our fishing rods in their cases, and two Zulu war shields and lances.

Strange and incomprehensible, these latter, until one learns that they once played a part in a moving picture of mine; that they have been no nearer to Africa than Hollywood, and that they were brought here to help two young Rineharts to be savages for a fancy-dress party.

In the one bedroom, two white iron beds, now smothered under their weight of bedding. At night I crawl down into one of them with a hot-water bottle and defy the winds from the snow fields above. But getting out in the morning is still a sad story. However, at seven-thirty comes Charley, who builds the living-room fire, so that dressing becomes a matter of a mad dash for the front room, garments in hand. One dresses first and washes afterward in May on "my ranch" in Wyoming.

But two beds, you say, and five Rineharts? Not to mention their sisters and their cousins and their aunts? Ah, but we have not come to the back porch, that high log structure just over the creek. Time was when five white beds stood in a row there, for all the world like a hospital ward, and early deer coming to drink might have heard four different varieties of sleeping noises. The author firmly refuses to make the fifth. And when the

early sun used to strike through the evergreens, the cottonwoods and box elder, onto a medley of old cowboy boots and breeches, sombreros and spurs, scattered on the floor of the old porch just over the creek. And when, later on, around the corner of the porch wild shrieks were heard as the cold shower was turned on.

"For heaven's sake, somebody, come out and fasten this sail cloth. It's blowing straight out!"

"Fasten it yourself."

"How can I, you dumbbell? And bring some soap. The pack rats have carried it off again."

The pack rats had done it. They were always doing it. Perhaps they were really trade rats, for they would bring something else in its place; acorns, perhaps, or a little heap of sticks. Polite thieves, these. I have known them to strip every button off a riding coat in one night, and leave a tribute of moth balls, stolen somewhere else, on the floor beneath as a peace offering.

But life does queer things to us. Like the trade rats, it takes away certain things and brings us something else in their stead. So now there are but two beds on the back porch that hangs over the creek, and they are not often occupied. Now and then comes one of the boys, but hardly again, I think, will there be five beds on that shabby porch, and four varieties of sleeping noises in the dawn when the deer come down to drink.

CHAPTER II

It is strange to be here so early. Strange, and a little lonely. The spring has been early, in spite of the snow above, and already the wild flowers are out in the mountain meadows. Lupin is already blooming; flat pink and white flowering mosses, violets and bluebells. There are dandelions on the lawn over at the main house, and early larkspur and star of Bethlehem along the creek. Already the calves have mostly been branded.

Up behind the corral a great prize bull surveys the world haughtily. But the big herd has been sold. There is still no money in cattle. All the mountain meadows and the lower ones, too, are filled with rich young grass, but there are few cows to eat it. A small herd, less than three hundred, is all that is left of the mighty horde which once went up the cattle trail in the summer to be turned loose in the mountain meadows. There is something wrong somewhere. The packers claim it is high wages, and shipping rates have been high also. But nothing has been done to encourage the cattleman. In spite of the Farm Loan Act, his banks still charge him as high as twelve per

THE MOUNTAIN SIDES ARE COVERED WITH LARKSPUR

MY COTTAGE IS A LOG ONE, THE OUTSIDE OLD AND MEAN

ELK IN THE SNOW
(See open space in center)

THE "DAIRY-MAID" BRINGS IN THE MILK HERD

cent for short-time money, and have hardly managed to keep going at that.

The Government will let them have money at half that rate, but so full of red tape is the procedure that the man who needs money in a hurry prefers to pay the higher rate. By the time his stock has been appraised and the necessary formalities gone through, it is often too late in a business that is filled with emergencies.

The fact is that the cattle business as conducted by the cowmen for so many years was based on conditions that could not last, on free grass and the open range. The great herds were left to shift for themselves in the long hard winters, and that so many survived was due only to the grace of Providence and the winds which swept the ridges bare of snow. There the cattle fed, slowly drifting to the southward all the time, and in the spring came the round-ups and the branding of the calves.

When the winter losses were sufficiently offset by the number of calves, the cowmen prospered and the herds grew.

But with the first wire fences the open range ceased. Now the cowmen must lay up hay for the wintering of their stock, and a steer will eat two tons. So the cattleman today must raise hay in quantities and stack it in his meadows; and when the spring is very late and the haystacks are gone,

he is fortunate indeed if he can get wagons through the snow with a reserve supply of fodder. Only too often he has to stand by and let them die, or later on take a revolver, poor chap, and put it to the heads of his dying cattle.

Small wonder he is selling his one and two year olds, and that a long winter may turn his herd from an asset into a liability.

Another situation has arisen also. Not only is the demand for young beef. Range cattle are grass-fed cattle, and an increasing discrimination in beef now demands that prime beef be fattened before marketing. For the old method of shipping straight to Chicago, there has had to be substituted a stop in the Corn Belt somewhere, a complicated and expensive business. Or the packers buy them at a lower rate and themselves send them to the feeders.

Small wonder, too, then, that the old cowman, whose expenses a few years ago consisted only of the initial purchase of some cows and a handful of men to punch them, is unable to meet the new conditions. When to these are added high shipping rates and the increase of wages and all expenses at the Chicago abattoirs, so that mature beef on the hoof is now bringing only nine or ten cents a pound, his problem becomes acute.

As a matter of fact, he has only met the fate of almost all the single-crop raisers of the country,

and he is turning, as they all must turn, to a diversity of crops for his salvation. The once-despised sheep—so detested that even to wear a black Stetson, the sheepman's hat, was to mark yourself of a hated and lower caste—the sheep have come into their own.

Sheep and dudes.

"Of course," says Alden resignedly, "a sheep has two crops, lambs and wool, and—well, it is understandable." But he looks away. There are no sheep on this ranch, and there will not be. They have taken to dudes instead. And maybe the dudes will have a double crop; health and a better Americanism. Who can tell?

There are, however, no dudes as yet. True, a half dozen old habitués of the ranch are already here, but they are not dudes. They are not greenhorns or tenderfeet anyhow. They saddle and unsaddle their own horses; they occasionally rise early and help to wrangle in the horses; their big Stetsons and high-heeled boots show the marks of long wear. Perhaps their bridles are a bit too ornate; they rather run to silver mountings.

But they do not attempt familiarities with the autocrats of the corral, as do the newcomers. Mostly they sit quietly on the bench in front of the barn in the sun and speak when speech seems

to be required. This is the essence of corral usage, and marks them of the elect.

Except for them, and the family in the main house, the ranch is still empty. Spread out like a small town, its streets of cottages are practically deserted. From one of them now and then comes the squeal of a portable phonograph in the evening, but it has an unearthly sound. Like the preliminary stirring of a sleeper soon to awake, for before long the season will be on; the cottages will open like buds, to change the figure, and from them will emerge girls in riding clothes and sports clothes, and men in shiny new Eastern riding apparel, which they will shamefacedly exchange very shortly for overalls from the store, tucked into high-heeled Western boots.

Even the store is getting ready. Throughout the winter it carries only ranch necessaries, but soon it will become our emporium. For years and years the woman head of a great school in Minneapolis has been Mrs. Levy at the store. Big and strong and humorous, she comes out at the end of her term, gets behind her counter, and sells us our pop and our candy, our creams and toothbrushes and face lotions, our Indian rugs, neckerchiefs and trout flies. And when fall comes and she has to go away she goes through sheer stark tragedy. No one must say good-bye to her. Her farewell to her horse takes place behind the

barn; she does not dare to turn and look back as the car carries her to the railroad station, twenty miles distant.

For this is her country. Long ago her father drove his family through the lower part of this ranch, over the old Bozeman Trail into Montana. Drove it through hostile country, for this has been the last stand of the Indian in his fight against the whites, and settled just north of here.

Now and then I have seen her on horseback at sunset, at the gate in the wire where the old trail crosses a small hillock. It is a small tribute she is paying, a sort of sunset prayer.

The ranch house is busy too. Uncle Will is still away in the east, but Domo is coming back from a visit to Kansas, and they are preparing a surprise for her.

All last week they were making curtains of a golden yellow satine, and on Saturday I was privileged to make my small contribution: a set of dishes, bright and sturdy, for her cabin shelves. Dunc has been building a tiny footbridge to her cabin, over the irrigating ditch which runs beside it, to replace the uncertain old planks which used to float away after each rain, leaving Domo marooned. Not marooned either. You do not maroon indomitable little women like Domo. Be sure she simply tucked up her skirts and waded across.

They say Domo knows every cowpuncher be-

tween the Rosebud and Powder River, and that any stranger from another range who comes riding in this direction just naturally ties his horse to the cottonwood tree beside her cabin and heads in.

And now Domo has found sanctuary after a busy and troubled life. Her little cabin was like nothing on earth when I first saw it, down on the lower ranch. Now a part of the surprise is a new rustic porch in front, and Dunc's bridge to match, and the yellow satine curtains. And you should see what already she had done to the inside of it before she went east to Kansas. The shelves she had put up, and the painting! She had brought a sick daughter here to get well, and Domo has cured her. Wouldn't you know she would cure her? Now the daughter is off in Montana teaching school, and Domo is coming back.

"What do you suppose she'll do when she sees it?" I inquired yesterday.

"Do?" they said. "She's going to laugh and cry and generally have a fit."

You see, it takes so little to make happiness for some people. And we are so apt to forget that little, back East.

I stopped my horse there a day or so ago to watch Dunc at the bridge. And there was Scout,

older and grayer than ever. And "deefer," Dunc says.

"Dear old Scout," I said, "I was afraid he'd be dead by this time."

"Dead nothing," said Dunc, gazing at the old dog. "He's got twenty dollars' worth of chocolate to eat before he dies. He can't die."

Which is the case indeed. A guest last year discovered the old dog's sweet tooth, and left a sum to endow him with chocolate for the rest of his natural life. An understanding person, this, who would have sympathized with Hugh Walpole's old lady who was secretly greedy for little cakes with icing on them. And one who knows that age cannot live on memories alone. Scout, dreaming of bears—for he has been a famous bear dog in his day—has earned the right to waken to a bit of indulgence.

So inside, the old log house is ready for Domo. Her windows are washed, her walls freshly kalsomined. The little old Confederate flag, full of bullet holes, in its frame on the wall, has had its glass newly polished. For Domo's father was the first Confederate officer to fall in the Civil War, and Domo's mother was both a mother and a widow at eighteen. Somehow that flag escaped when the Indians burned Domo's ranch house to the ground years ago.

All that long and busy life raising a big family,

all alone, Indians, widowhood, struggles, and now sanctuary and peace. And even a plank securely fastened so she can dip water out of the creek without wetting her feet. It takes so very little to make happiness.

CHAPTER III

Up at the corral, of course, there are some changes. Pete, who took part of the photographs illustrating this article, is off taking pictures in Egypt; Ben has got married and is off on his honeymoon; and Bruce has taken a carload of horses to Pittsburgh.

But how long and sad a time it seems since Howard used to travel East in a box car with fifty or sixty elk for the parks there, emerging at the end of the trip pretty weary and with straws stuck to his clothes and in his hair, but smiling and cheerful. And having brushed his clothes and generally cleaned up, went in that same old gray sack suit and soft hat to dinners in great houses, and graced those tables, too, by heaven, from the White House on down.

But Howard is gracing the table of the good Lord God now, and riding the trails of Paradise. Only somehow, lately, when I have been seeing the elk about——

Curley is not here either. But Curley is still young and still alive. I saw him ride his first bucker, and now he is with the Hundred and One Ranch outfit, riding, roping, and bulldogging

steers. Earning good money, too, but probably not saving any of it. You will know him if you see his show this year; the small dark-haired boy who isn't afraid of the worst of the rough string.

"Scratch him, Curley!" we used to yell, and Curley would scratch him higher and higher. And if this means little or nothing to you, let me say that this scratching is not a caress such as one uses on a pet dog, but that art of the rider of a wild and bucking horse which requires him to scratch his horse's neck with his spurs. The higher he scratches, the more points it counts. And by the same token, the higher he lifts his feet the less purchase on the saddle. It's a rough game, but a fair one; man against horse, and all the advantage to the horse.

How disappointed that grand-stand audience was at the Montana State Fair when the announcer through a megaphone announced the presence there that day of the—let's be modest, but this is what he said—"celebrated writer, Mary Roberts Rinehart," and they thought he had said "rider"!

But there are others here who ride as well as Curley. Bill and George and Bruce. A day or two ago they brought in a few of the bad string and we had some riding.

In the old days, I remember, we had no bucking chute, and the wild horses had to be saddled in the

open. It was a time to pick out your shelter and get ready to make for it. But now they saddle in the chute, working through the bars, and to the accompaniment of wild squeals and savage kicks. When the saddle is on and the cinch well tightened, the rider climbs up over the top and lowers himself carefully. Then he settles himself in the saddle and takes a death grip on the reins, and when the word is given and the door is opened, out shoots a malignant, twisting, roaring and rearing devil, whose one ambition is to get his rider off and then turn on him and trample him.

Man against horse, you see, and all the advantage to the horse; but somehow the man wins. Mostly. Now and then, of course, there are mishaps, and there is a sort of dreadful silence. But generally the hurts are small ones. A few compresses, a day or two in bed with the phonograph going and perhaps a crap game on the counterpane, a delicious turning over when at four A.M. comes the call: "Turn out, you fellows."

And then again a drawing of names out of a hat:

"What have you got?"

"Satan. What's yours?"

"Dynamite again."

"You better watch out, boy. You're going to break that horse one of these days!" And so it goes.

The saddle horses have not come back from their winter quarters on Wild Horse Creek, just beyond the Powder River at the Bar Eleven Ranch. Within a day or so now Bill is going after them to drive them up. Bringing three hundred horses a hundred miles was no trick in the old days of the open range, but the range is wired now and so it means sticking to the roads.

Gentle hints on my part that I would enjoy seeing the drive, nay, even being a part of it, have brought no response as yet. This West still draws a fine line between what is fitting for a woman to do and what is man's work. Even although it has a woman governor, whom it dubs in facetious moments the governess, and seems rather to like her. But even there there was a reason. Partially it was sentimental, this appointing of the governor's widow to fill his almost expired term. But partly, too, it was good politics, for it was too late for the party to groom a new candidate.

Still, it is not so long since a woman who wore riding breeches out here instead of a divided skirt was likely to be regarded with a certain suspicion.

So it is spring on the ranch, and will soon be summer.

The milk herd is giving great pailfuls of creamy milk, and tiny calves are learning to drink out of tin pans.

"Don't you ever let them—er—nurse at all?"

I inquired timidly of Pete, the Danish dairy maid, whose name is certainly not Pete at all.

And Pete, who is milking a fractious cow and has her legs tied together, says: "No. It iss not good. I yust feed them out of a pan."

In the barnyard are still a goodly number of young Hereford steers, sad remnant of the great herd of the past. And in a small and private inclosure is the shorthorn bull. His eye is mild, but his manner is not. He has a habit of scraping the ground with his fore feet, which is less polite than it sounds, and this afternoon I caught him stealing the pig's milk. In vain they protested, in vain they got into the trough and tried to edge him out. With one thrust of his great head he shoved them aside, amid furious squealing, and drank and drank and drank.

Time was, and not so long ago either, when such a thing as a milk cow was practically unknown on a cattle ranch; when condensed milk was as staple as bacon and canned tomatoes. Indeed, riding up the trail yesterday with Peter, who is a young British scion of nobility and a visitor to a ranch near by, Peter confided to me that condensed milk not being to his taste, he was milking a cow once daily. "Nobody else can milk," he explained, "and I am not much good at it myself. But anyhow I have to leave some for the calf."

The blacksmith's shop is already in full blast.

Just now he is repairing the broken irons of farm wagons; his fire glows as he works the bellows, and is reflected in the hundreds of horseshoes hung on the rafters over his head. But it is when the rest of the horses come back that he will have his rush season. Quiet horses, with an upturned foot between his leather-clad knees; less quiet ones; "Whoa, boy! Stand still there." And wild and terrified horses, lunging and rearing.

Wham, bang! Big shoes for big horses, little shoes for small ones, and the stocks for the crazy ones who aren't willing to stand at all.

Two great wooden frames hinged to the wall are brought out parallel. The frantic horse is placed between them and a strong web band thrown across underneath him. The turning of a handle, and he is lifted into the air. Now let him struggle and bite and kick. The foot to be shod is securely tied, and if a horse could faint with horror, it would happen now.

Wham, bang, bang, wham! And so the shoe is on, and the horse freed. He rushes out and into the corral, there to reflect on what has happened to him, and to store up in a singularly retentive memory these insults against another attack.

But there are other signs of an early spring. In five minutes' walk yesterday evening we saw ten deer feeding in these comparatively low meadows. Not so low, really, at five thousand

feet. Later on they will retreat into the interior of the range, and fight flies in the heat of the day in brush and timber. But now they are still here, black-tailed deer with round white rumps which give them, in retreat, the appearance of small white boulders leaping up the hillside.

They are not easily alarmed, however. Rather, they are curious. They are apt, if you are a bit wary, to come toward you, tense, watchful and inquisitive. The buck leads and the does follow. But he is filled with responsibility, and before long his caution stops him. He is unarmed and knows it; his new spring headgear is just sprouting and is still only a pair of velvet-covered prongs, some three or four inches long. His last year's ones he scratched off against a tree some time ago.

But it is the elk which really thrill us. Stalking elk is a difficult matter. They are very wary, and have already commenced their retreat into the interior fastnesses. To see our elk, then, we have had to climb on horses up to the head of the cañon, and then go still on and up to nine thousand feet, toward the salt lick. A long pull, this, and a hard one.

A rattlesnake under a stone in a ticklish spot causes a small excitement. It is rather early for him, and a trifle high; some misogynist of a snake, perhaps, leaving his kind for these upper levels, and rattling his venom at a passing world; an

orange marmot on a rock, sentry for his colony and ridiculously sticking to his post until we are almost on him; blue grouse, flying into trees and so protectively colored that only a keen eye can see them against the branches; little water ousels, their nests under waterfalls so that their babies are true children of the mist.

Up and up. The horses are still soft and are covered with sweat. Already the men from the ranger station have cleared the trail, but to the novice it is still an adventure. Here it hangs on the edge of a cliff, here it twists and turns on itself in a switchback.

Again it strikes an open spot and the horses pull hard at the reins; they want to eat the grass and early flowers, they yearn to lie down and roll, for under the saddles they are intolerably itchy with the heat. One indeed tries it. I turn around and see Moxie clear down and preparing to roll, and a white-faced young Eastern woman still hanging to the saddle and rather bewildered.

"Kick him!" I yell. "Jerk him up! He's going to roll!" She jerks, and Moxie lifts an annoyed head, slowly following it with his body.

"Why in the world did you let him do it?" I inquire.

"I just thought he was tired and wanted to lie down," she explains.

And she is still more bewildered by the laughter that follows.

THE CREEK FALLS THREE THOUSAND FEET DOWN THE MOUNTAIN

DOMO HOLDS THE BRIDGE

IN THE STOCKS

Photographs by Arthur Dailey

TIME FOR A DRINK AT THE CORRAL

SADDLING A BAD ONE IN THE BUCKING CHUTE

JUST A BRONC!

CHAPTER IV

My own horse is Bluebeard. He is a new horse, and I have so named him because at the angle of his jaws his roan-ness becomes a blue-white whisker. He is still very strange, and highly suspicious. He seems to feel that this new home place is filled with rocks that may at any moment turn out to be something else and probably something dangerous; and he hates deep fords and irrigation ditches with a strong and lusty hatred.

But his particular antipathy is gates. This morning, for instance, it became necessary for me to close a gate along a narrow trail. Now the time has gone by when I nimbly slide off my animal, close a gate and swing myself into the saddle again. I prefer to close the gate while still mounted. So the process this morning and each morning is something like this:

(*a*) I ride through, carefully turn Bluebeard, and kick him toward the gate.

(*b*) Bluebeard sidesteps almost off the trail and down into the creek, recovers himself, and turns to depart.

(*c*) I kick him around, he takes a fresh grip on

the bit, and starts up the hill, knocking my head on the low-hanging branch of a tree.

(*d*) I feel my head, find it still intact, and then repeat the performance.

The final result is achieved only when, passing the gate on a jump, I catch hold of it and swing it to. The bad moment is the one when either the gate gives in or I do; so far it has been the gate.

But we have not found an elk yet.

Now it is a peculiarity of elk that when they lie resting in a sunny meadow they greatly resemble the rocks of their native habitat. From a distance, at least. The result was that we were fairly on the lot of them before they rose leisurely to their feet and turned out to be what they were. Even then they were not frightened. We rode slowly toward them, but although they retreated a bit they did not run. They looked at us with a sort of eager curiosity, their long ears erect, their big, tawny bodies ready for flight, but not flying. Not indeed until we stopped within easy snapshot distance of them, did they turn and move in single file into the timber.

There are twenty-two thousand of them here in Wyoming, and soon, if they continue to multiply, the question of their winter feeding is going to be an important one. In fact, the protection

against hunters of wild game has already made this a problem in some regions.

To one who loves the wild life as I do, it would seem less cruel to thin the herds by judicious and quick killing than to allow them to increase to such numbers that they must inevitably starve. The East can have little idea of the rigors of these Western mountain winters; of the depth of the snows, or the hardships entailed by a late spring. Better, far kinder and better, a quick bullet in some vital spot than the slow anguish of starvation.

Nailed on the door at the store is the game warden's announcement of the open season for game. It says:

"Bag limit: One elk, one matured male mountain sheep, one male deer with horns, each season.

"Not more than thirty fish in possession at any one time, or more than fifteen pounds of fish."

But it is easy to write of killing off some of the game, out of kindness!

Yesterday, Alden having ridden ahead, I was surprised to see him slide off his horse and crawl to the edge of a hillside, making the while frantic motions for silence. When we got up to him there were elk below us, and looking up. Five of them, and not a hundred feet away. I may preach the killing of them to reduce their numbers; I may and do believe it will yet have to be done, in all

kindness. But if I had had a rifle in each hand I would not have fired a shot.

As to the thirty fish or fifteen pounds, it sounds rather a joke to me just now.

Today it is raining, and after working at this article all morning, the suggestion was made that although the day was fit for nothing else on earth, it might do for fishing.

"Fish?" said I. "And with the water the way it is, how could they see a fly?"

"Who said fly?" retorted the suggester. "A worm! A good, active, prehensile worm at this time of the year."

And little Billy having offered to dig some worms, shortly thereafter we started for the creek, the worms securely fastened in a tin tobacco box. The rain fell; the trails were gumbo and the rocks were slippery, but who cared? Not the fish, certainly.

Great still pools and not a rise; eddies beneath waterfalls, and no worms wanted; at last the dam, and "There are always trout here. Now watch!" and nothing happening.

And so now at last the fire again, and warm dry clothing, and—shall I speak of it?—from beneath the floor of the bedroom a faint but unmistakable odor, as though not only I but a skunk has sought the shelter of my cabin on this rainy day.

CHAPTER V

THIS has been great Indian country. Just northwest is the Custer battlefield; and southeast, so that now and then we ride past it, is the scene of the Wagon Box disaster. It is not so long since the Crows, the Sioux and the Blackfeet finally decided to be good Indians, and they have been so, more or less, since.

But like all nomads, they have left few traces behind them. Now and then one can pick up arrowheads of course, and on top of more than one high and windy hill on the ranch we still find the circle of stones which held down the skins of their winter lodges.

They chose no sheltered valleys for these winter camps, but always the top of a cold and windswept hill, the purpose being to keep watch there for their enemies, I dare say.

Strange to stand there as we did today and look out over the great plains, now dotted with plowed fields where soon the wheat will grow. Strange to think back over only fifty years, hardly a day in the history of nations, and see the strange and moving panorama which has passed over these very acres.

First the buffalo and the Indians; tall majestic Blackfeet, crafty hard-riding Cheyennes, and the patient, cruel Sioux. Then the first pioneers, and with them the soldiers to protect them; log forts and mud forts and long forgotten graves. Later on, moving up from the South in the eternal search for grass and water, long-horned Mexican and Texas cattle, driven by men in tall, broad-brimmed Mexican hats, with heavy silver-mounted saddles and a new terminology borrowed from the Spanish and still enriching our language. Cattle wars, water wars, wars against the sheep. Even the Boer War and great corrals built here to round up horses for the British cavalry in far-off South Africa. They are still standing, those corrals, and some of the English who came over at that time are still here.

But now——

A railroad runs through the valley, and tourists ride through and gaze patronizingly from the windows of their Pullman cars.

It looks monotonous to them, perhaps; monotonous and a trifle dreary. Because they do not see in each homestead a conquest, in each little weather-boarded town a miracle.

Nor do they know that just beyond this cultivated strip which follows the railroad still lies that portion of the old West which can never be conquered. The mountains.

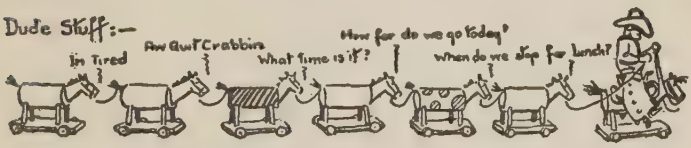
Man cannot civilize a mountain.

It is growing warm. The local paper said this morning that now a man can use his vest to patch the seat of his trousers, which means that summer will soon be here.

And with summer the fourth great movement will be under way. Indians and buffaloes, pioneers and soldiers, cattle and punchers, and now —dudes. They will come in their hundreds and their thousands, bringing good Eastern money in exchange for good active Western life.

And soon the cottages around me will open like buds, and from them will emerge girls in riding clothes and men in shiny new Eastern riding apparel, which they will shamefacedly exchange very shortly for overalls from the store, tucked into high-heeled Western boots.

Riding parties will be taken out, and Joe DeYong has made this little drawing out of the depths of his experience.



And the bad string will be brought in, and in a week or so Bill and George and Bruce and Curley—did I say Curley is coming back? We have just had a letter—will lead some bucking, fighting

devils out to the chute and risk life and limb. So that next winter a number of people can be showing rather blurred-looking snapshots and saying:

"It isn't very clear. The great brute was coming right at me. But you can make out what it is."

The old ones are coming back too. They always do.

They leave their worn but beloved old garments here, and in half an hour they are in them again and looking about for changes. Half fearful too. They don't like changes.

But we have one for them this year. They have harnessed Wolf Creek! "Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away." From up toward the cañon a great conduit leads down water from the creek, and by a system too intricate for my intellect produces enough electric current for a small city.

Proudly did they lead me to my cottage and proudly did they show me my illumination.

"It is wonderful," I said.

But I am not so sure. Just a little do I miss my feeble oil lamp, set in the washbasin beside the head of my bed. There was something somnolent about it; to rise up, half asleep, and blow it out had been my last conscious thought for so many summers. Now I reach up and turn a switch.

I have a terrible feeling that the hand of civili-

zation has reached out, even here, and caught me; that some day I shall return and find the horse-shoe knocker replaced by an electric bell; and that they may even board in the shower bath on the side porch, and that never again will I hear wild shrieks from it as the water is turned on, and a voice calling:

"For heaven's sake, somebody, come out and fasten this sail cloth! It's blowing straight out!"

BOOK IV

RIDING THE CIRCLE ON HANGING WOMAN

CHAPTER I

I WAS wearing my chaps the other day, those beloved shabby old chaps of dingy gray leather, with scallops of nail heads down the wings and a large steel R at the lower corner, which I wear only for photographs and long horseback journeys. And a new "dude" man at the corral asked me if I got them through a mail-order house!

When I told him that they came from the man in Sheridan whose business it is to make them, he seemed extremely surprised. But it came to me then, almost as a blow, that a good many people believe that the cowboy now exists only in fiction and the rodeos; that the mail-order cowboy, a term jocularly originated by the cowboy himself to refer to the dandies of his profession, has been taken seriously by the East; that it is convinced that all the old cow country now raises is either wheat or dudes, that the beef animals of the country are

collected for the packing houses by ones and twos from the milk herds of small farmers, and that the former cattle ranges are all now cut up into suburban lots, neatly fenced in and smelling strongly of cabbages after a rain.

But, as it happens, the cowboy is still with us. Discouraged he may be, but not extinct. Still on circle he wakens to the call of "Roll out" at 3:30, sits up in his tarp bed, puts on his hat and is dressed; still as nighthawk he drives the bed wagon all day and stands guard all night over the "cavvy"; still as night guard he circles the beef herds through the hours of darkness, singing to the cattle to quiet them; and still he drives his nervous snuffy animals incredible miles to the railroad and points them to the pens only to have, as of yore, the switch engine come along, whistle, and stampede them wildly to the four corners of the earth.

True, his herds are smaller today. The old days of bunches of 25,000 cattle and upward are practically over. But save in this one particular, his life and his methods are unchanged. On the range he makes and implicitly obeys his own laws; his apparently loose and haphazard organization on the round-up is actually compact and fitted together like the pieces of a scroll-saw puzzle; from the folding of the blankets in his round-up bed to the place for the nighthawk's saddle, he follows

certain arbitrary rules based on experience and custom, and thus eliminates friction. He is, as always, his own doctor, surgeon, blacksmith, cook, carpenter, hunter, wrangler, packer, herder and mechanic. He works in season eighteen hours a day and often twenty. And he has about as much time to think how picturesque he is as a one-armed man with the hives.

About two weeks ago, Domo's nephews rode over from Birney to ask me to go with them "on circle." It was during some riding, and just about that time Bruce's horse came out of the bucking chute with a roar, "broke in two" as they say out here, leaped, whirled, reared and finally fell. When he got up again there was Bruce stretched out on the ground and not moving.

There was one of those horrified silences, then people ran. But he lay still for a long time, and when they finally carried him off we knew that he had a badly broken leg, and would never ride a bucking horse again. He was conscious, when they put him in a car to take him to Sheridan, and he waved an indomitable good-bye as he left. But whenever I get a letter from somebody protesting against the cruelty to the horse in this riding, I think about Bruce. And about Jack, too, only that is much, much worse.

And I wonder if these people know anything about these outlaw horses who will not be broken,

and remain potential killers to the end. And I wonder, too, if they think this sort of riding is all show stuff. If they do, let them ride the circle with me; let them see wicked old Alizan standing quiet, apparently watching the cattle, and then watch him, as I did, suddenly and without warning rear up straight in the air and fall over backward! How Irving escaped that attempt at murder, I do not know; for an attempt at murder it clearly was.

And let them watch Burton and his buckskin; warily approaching it, finally a foot in the stirrup and easing himself into the saddle, and then, as regularly as he is mounted, see it using every trick in its little buckskin brain; bucking, rearing, stamping, squealing and bolting. It takes about ten acres of ground for Burton to mount that buckskin, and he can have it for all of me. It bucked into a mud-hole once and I hoped it would stick there and die, but it only threw up its head and knocked one of Burton's nice front teeth back against the roof of his mouth, and came out unharmed.

Let them, to come right back home, watch my own Bluebeard the day they put a packsaddle on him. I was standing by when I saw this child of my heart rush out of the corral, kick, buck, roar and finally bolt to parts unknown. The thought that some fine day he might mistake me for a pack-

saddle was too much for me, and I am now riding a tall bay named Prince. Aside from the fact that I should have a stepladder to mount him, he seems safe enough. But who can tell? Some day a wasp may sting him, or something may touch his right ear—he is mighty peculiar about his right ear—and then "one toot and I'll be oot" as the sexton said in church to the old lady with the ear trumpet.

But, as I was saying, the Bones boys had asked me to ride the circle with him.

CHAPTER II

Not that their name is Bones at all. They have a perfectly good Southern name, but they began working with cattle outfits when they were so small that they had to chin themselves onto their horses, and some wag christened them Big and Little Bones. So the Bones brothers they remain today, and their ranch over on Hanging Woman Creek is the Bones Brothers' Ranch.

It is four years now since they first came over here from Hanging Woman. The cattle business was at its worst then, and so one evening they saddled up and started for this ranch. They rode eighty-five miles that night, each leading an extra horse, and the next morning they arrived at the corral.

A junior Rinehart was on duty there, his first day as corral dog at a salary of thirty-five dollars a month, a horse and saddle and his keep, and he rose from his bench and greeted them with his best Harvard manner.

"May I take your horses?" he said politely.

Nothing of the sort, they say, had ever happened to them before. In a sort of daze they got down—they were perhaps eighteen or twenty then—but

they recovered enough to state that they could unsaddle their own animals and that they had come to work.

And work they did and ride too, until, a year or so ago, with the hope that cattle would come into their own again, they went back to Hanging Woman Creek, to Percy and Daisy Bell, his little Southern wife, to Uncle Taylor and Aunt Mamie, and to the herd of cattle in the foothills under Poker Jim Butte.

Back to Southern Montana, where the open range is still the cow range, where some of the long-horned survivors of the old Texas and Mexican herds still roam the hills, where the Indians still slip out from the reservation at night and raid the cattle, and where the winter temperature sometimes falls to fifty below zero. Back, in a word, to the old life and the old game, only now with a handful of dudes in the summer to tide over slim years, and with the railroad only sixty-five miles away at Sheridan, instead of its former hundred to Miles City.

Yes, the nearest town used to be Miles City. And when Domo's husband was kicked by a horse and fatally hurt, Dad—the boys' father—rode that hundred miles in one night to Miles City for a doctor. And got one, too, although it was no use after all. The road was "slick" that night, as they say out here, and there wasn't a house along

the way. So for fear the horse would slip and throw him and get away, Dad tied a rope to the horn of his saddle and then around his waist. He was taking no chances that night.

Yes, it is better now. There are doctors at Sheridan, only sixty-five miles away, and a fair-to-middling road, and the mail comes three times a week by stage to Birney, three miles from the ranch. Only don't be fooled by Birney; it has three of four houses, a store, a school and a church, but there is nobody to serve the church; its wheezy little old parlor organ has long been silent, its pulpit empty. The straggling street is just a dusty road, down which herds of cattle come to drink long thirsty draughts in the Tongue Rievr.

You see, Birney is really the store, kept by the boys' Aunt Mamie and Uncle Taylor. It has everything, has that store, even to an ancient and unused soda fountain at the rear. Usually there is an Indian pony hitched outside and a buck inside with long braids, buying. They can have credit, too, if they are good Indians, up to ten dollars. But:

"If they get to owing more than that," says Uncle Taylor, "they go somewhere else."

But where they are to go in this empty country is beyond my comprehension.

The store is a sort of social center in Birney. On mail days in summer, Aunt Mamie makes a big

freezer of ice cream, and all sorts of people with soft Southern voices drop in and sit about and chat. Odd, how many Southerners one finds in this part of the world. Aunt Mamie and Uncle Taylor came out thirty-eight years ago, bringing with them the old silver which had been buried in a pond all through the Civil War and was to be buried over and over again against Indian raids. And the great early herds driven up from Texas and New Mexico brought with them Southern cowboys who have lost nothing in the transplanting. Direct children of the South, hot-tempered, soft-spoken and gallant, they still use the Texas drawl or the comprehensive "You-all" and address a lady as, much to my astonishment, I was requested to address the Queen of England; as "Mam."

Southerners and English. The early days saw great English cattle companies formed out here and many of the men who represented them still remain. I saw one not long ago at the county fair judging work horses; great animals with marceled manes and feathered locks. Yet he is an earl, although his neighbors call him Oliver. The Earl of Portsmouth. And a fire last spring destroyed a ranch house which contained many gifts from Queen Victoria to the historic Moncrieff family which owned it.

So one perceives that a social hour at Birney

may be a great deal more than it appears to be. Here is a tiny Western town, so small that it could be built in the corner of any moving-picture lot; a dirt road without sidewalks, a dance hall over the store, reached by a flight of wooden stairs outside, and a row of horses tied to a hitching rail; within, men in Stetsons, chaps and spurs move about and women meet and talk and, perhaps, drink delicately out of Aunt Mamie's silver goblets.

Silver goblets? Why, certainly. They were as black as ink, Aunt Mamie says, when they came up out of that pond, but they are bright and shining now.

Maybe we need to revise some more of our ideas about this last pioneer country of ours.

I know of one little white ranch house where the water is brought up in a tin pail on a wire trolley from the creek below, and is served on a table set out with fine old Georgian silver. And there is a genuine Adam sideboard there which Eastern people always want to purchase, and old painted window shades that came over from Holland when the Dutch discovered New York.

Carried in wagons over any sort of road too; sometimes no road at all. They will put anything in a wagon, these people, and cart it along to make a home. And they make homes too.

It is haying time now, and only the other day a man and his family engaged for the haying on the

next ranch to this. They had lost their property in Montana in the recent hard times and so they started out as a family to earn.

They drove up in an ancient car with a trailer, the father, the mother and three young sons. And out of that car and trailer they unpacked their household goods: a phonograph, a cat, a dog, a coop full of chickens, a canary bird and a sewing machine. The bunk house was old and dilapidated, but in a few hours it was a home. There were curtains at the windows and rugs on the floor. The cat was on the doorstep, the dog was in the yard and the chickens in a runway. And the canary bird had been loosed for its two hours' freedom a day and was singing in a cottonwood overhead!

The cow country still raises something more than wheat and dudes, you see. It raises men and women.

But it also still raises cows.

CHAPTER III

THE evening after the invitation came I had a heart-to-heart talk with Lizzie. She and Dorothy had likewise been invited to the round-up, and I was feeling Lizzie out.

"How," I said tentatively, "do you feel about cows, Lizzie?"

"I don't care about them," she replied promptly, "and I don't mean maybe!"

"But a horse can run faster than a cow," I argued, largely for my own comfort. "And they said a cow-and-calf round-up. That doesn't include bulls."

"Still, I daresay the bulls will be hanging round," she observed pessimistically. "They generally are."

Dorothy, on the other hand, was quite placid about it. Living in New York, as she does, she was entirely fearless.

"They never attack people on horses," she said, with an air of finality. "Of course, if one is thrown—— The thing to do is to stick to your horse, of course."

Well, that sounded simple enough at the time,

and on that basis it was decided. None of us, you see, had ever heard of Pink and his ability to turn on a dime and have a nickel left over; later I was to ride Pink and to be a party to this celebrated performance of his, but I did not know this at the time.

And so, on a soft summer day, we started.

There was nothing particularly dressy about us as we left the ranch. Lizzie wore a battered sombrero, riding breeches, boots and an ancient leather hunting coat, into the pockets of which she had stuffed everything she had forgotten to put into her bag. Dorothy was similarly equipped save that her pockets held two packs of cards and a bridge score. Personally I had abandoned a brilliant red neckerchief for one of a color more soothing to the bovine eye, and carried a stub of a pencil and some sheets of paper.

"If we get through all right," I said, "there may be some material in it. After all, what do we know about our beefsteaks, except that they cost too much?"

"Well, we're going to know more," said Lizzie gloomily. "But if you ask me, I'll take my beef hereafter on my plate and not on the hoof."

Our saddles were lashed to the running board, our bridles lay at our feet in the rear of the car. We stopped in Sheridan for ice-cream sodas, on the theory that we were going into a dry and

thirsty land, and then struck out for the Montana line and what lay beyond.

Almost at once the country began to change. The mountains receded and we found ourselves in a maze of low and barren buttes, among which the road threaded through empty country, except where at long intervals a rough track struck the main highway, and where at such intersections there were mail boxes. But not the neat boxes of the Eastern rural free delivery. Mounted on a post at intervals of a few miles would be, sometimes, a corrugated zinc washtub, set on its side against the weather, or a rough wooden box, and even now and then a tin gasoline can with the end cut out. Sturdy little points of contact with the outer world, to many a rancher in this back country his three-times-a-week trip to these small outposts is the only break in the dull and arduous routine of his days.

A post card from Aunt Sallie down in Colorado, even a catalogue from a mail-order house, are like sounds to break his silence and to remind him of a distant life from which he is cut off.

Prairie dogs everywhere. Sitting up on top of their burrows, their tiny tails wagging up and down instead of laterally, and their bark rather like the squeaking of an unoiled gate. It was hard not to run over them as they dashed across the road; my heart was in my mouth, for I have a

weakness for prairie dogs. Indeed, I bid fair to become one of the world's great experts on prairie dogs, for I own two of them.

Thus I am able to state that it is the custom of the prairie dog to live in the wood bin beside the fireplace; to make its private and particular home in a small wooden box with a hole cut in the side, and to close the opening to this box after his entrance, with a teacup; that by preference he lines his nest with hairs from a fine polar-bear rug; that he sharpens his front teeth on the legs of wicker chairs and whenever possible on the fingers of the human hand, and that while he will eat oats and bread, he greatly favors the sunflower seeds a parrot spills on the floor, candy and the icing from cakes.

Yes, I have a parrot. He was wished on me recently. He has a cold and fishy eye, but after I heard him sing "Good-bye, my lover, good-bye," in a sort of adenoidal soprano I simply had to have him.

Well, to go back, prairie dogs everywhere, and once in many miles a homesteader's cabin, mostly abandoned; a one-room log shack falling to ruins, a tiny barn built to house hopes that never materialized, and here and there evidences of what was once a plowed field, the only crop now the ever-present sagebrush.

But as the road winds on, the country improves.

It grows more rugged, and the brilliantly colored buttes show unexpected trees. It is like Arizona. Now and then one glimpses the Tongue River, and here and there ranch houses surrounded by green and irrigated fields. But all about and above them lie the dry hills, almost the last open cattle range in the country.

And then Hanging Woman Creek, and the ranch house, and a hot-and-cold shower, and supper.

The next day was given over to getting ready for the round-up. Near the corral Dad had set up the cook tent and the mess wagon, and was experimenting with a new stove. He exuded all that day a spicy odor of boiling ham and an air of joyous anticipation. For Dad dearly loves a round-up, and he dearly loves to cook.

Out here a man numbers cooking as a part of his necessary accomplishments; a considerable part of his life is spent on the range—not cooking, but mountain—and the efficiency of the outfit depends largely on its food. But then, what doesn't a man have to know out here? He has to be able to shoe a horse in the field without most of the necessary adjuncts, he has to be a carpenter, to repair his own automobile, to be a hydrostatic engineer of sorts, to cook, to break horses, to farm, to handle wild cattle, in emergency to do minor surgical operations, to build and keep in order his

wire fences and his gates, to raise his own vegetables and to slaughter his own meat.

And by that same token, on the evening of that day, we slaughtered. We had to have fresh beef for the round-up.

"How's your shooting?" Little Bones asked me casually after supper.

"Pretty bad," I replied modestly.

"We're going up to kill a beef steer," he said. "I thought maybe you'd like to shoot him."

"Shoot him!" I echoed faintly.

I had read, by and large, a good bit about the slaughtering of beef animals, and I had an idea one knocked them on the head, or something. Anyhow it was scientific, and every ounce of the carcass was used, for food and glue and buttons, and so on. And all the profit the packers made was the buttons. Or was it the glue? But to go out in cold blood and shoot one!

However, the creature was going to be shot, and for some reason everyone seemed to think I was the logical person to shoot it. So at last I took the rifle and we started out. On the way I deliberately hardened my heart. I counted all my old scores against the race of cows. The time one chased me along the country lane because it didn't like my parasol; the other time when another one flew after my Airedale dog and the idiot of a dog ran to me for protection.

And I think—I still think—it would have been all right when we got there had not the creature stood gazing at me ruminatively. And it looked exactly like a woman who had lived next door to me when I was a little girl, and I couldn't do it; it would have been murder.

So Little Bones dropped on one knee and shot him. It was neatly done, and the steer just fell down and lay still. Percy ran over and cut his throat, and within a minute they were skinning the hide off.

Somewhere Lizzie had secured a folding seat. Like the story of the little boy who said the spinal column was a long thin bone, your head set on one end and you set on the other—this seat consisted of one rodlike support, with a point stuck into the ground at one end and Lizzie at the other. And as the proceedings went on, this seat began visibly to wabble. It was not until the enormous stomach was rolled out, however, that Lizzie rose feebly from her perch and moved to a distance.

"I am perfectly all right," she said in a small voice. "I was just thinking about tripe, that's all. I used to be fond of it. Tripe and onions, you know."

She shuddered and moved away.

The hide lay on the ground. Thus stretched out it looked enormous, but it is only worth a dollar and a half today. The boys will sell it for that

and later buy back its equivalent in leather for fifty dollars or so. Made into shoes or suit-cases, it will bring several times that amount.

Long knives now, and the beef being cut into segments for transportation. The dogs are being fed choice bits from the head; the rest is being placed in the meat sheet, a canvas as large as a tent, later to be stowed in the mess wagon along with the stove, Dad's bed, the bags of potatoes, the condensed milk, the canned stuff and those fresh vegetables and fruits which had been added in deference to our Eastern stomachs, and the cook tent itself. The real round-up dinner consists of beefsteak with plenty of gravy, potatoes, canned corn or peas, sirup and, as a great delicacy, sugar-coated prunes.

It was the next day in the hills that I saw Lizzie sitting on the ground with her plate in her lap, surveying a slice of roast beef thoughtfully. Then she shoved it gingerly to one side and began on potatoes and beans.

CHAPTER IV

THE outfit started out in two divisions. The first included the mess and bed wagons, which went by a roundabout route, up the east fork of Hanging Woman; and the cowboys and the cavvy, which started up Roberts Gulch, went along Timber Creek and then over the divide.

But before we mount Pink and start off with this second division, let us study this little Wild-West show of ours. The discipline and organization of a cow outfit in the field is almost as fixed as that of a military unit. It must be both mobile and self-supporting, and it must work without friction. And whether the outfit is large or small the procedure is the same.

Take the wagons, for instance. The cook, in our case Dad, drives the mess or chuck wagon. And that mess wagon is worth more than a cursory glance. Just inside the end gate stands erect the original kitchen cabinet, with a front which lets down to form a table, and with numerous compartments for dry groceries. In the body of the wagon is packed the steel camp range and the stovepipe, the cook tent, the meat in its heavy tarp covering, kitchen utensils, a spade for digging out

the water springs, boxes and bags of provisions and the cook's bed roll.

The bed wagon follows it. It is driven by the nighthawk, that unfortunate who sometimes drives the wagon all day and always guards the horses at night, and who is lucky if he gets a cat nap when the animals lie down between midnight and two A.M.! This wagon contains the round-up beds for the men, which have twelve-foot strips of tarpaulin, one-half to be doubled over the blankets within against rain or heavy dew, the rope for the rope corral, and the nighthawk's saddle. Along its end gate is frequently built the rack to hold the branding irons.

But this division of the unit is still incomplete. Of what use is a wagon train unless it gets to where it is wanted? By custom immemorial, the wagons are led by a pilot, a cowboy on horseback who knows the country. This individual has certain specified duties of his own. He picks out the camp sites, opens and closes all gates, and, riding ahead of the mess wagon, generally clears the way for it. And although it is the duty of the wrangler to carry water for the cook, it is the pilot's job to dig out and clean up the spring ready for him.

The second division consists of the loose horses, or cavvy, and the cowboys. Extra horses must be carried always, as riding two circles a day may

easily involve fifty or sixty miles of hard going. Up and down the mountainsides, into creek beds and out, the horses work hard and must be changed often. And even with a small outfit like this of ours, only sixty horses in all, it is impossible to carry any grain for them. They must graze at night in pastures where the July sun has burned the grass and the creeks are almost dry.

This division is the outfit proper. It throws off the cattle from the high meadows into the bottom lands and bunches them. It drives them in to form one vast, nervous and milling herd on the top of some piece of high ground, for cattle are snuffy in low places with timber above them; it cuts out the cows with unbranded calves, and later it ropes and brands them. And at the beef round-up it bunches the steers for market and drives them slow, endless miles to the railroad, through days of noise and thick dust clouds and nights of constant watchfulness. And when it is apparently all over, the cars waiting and the cattle finally being pointed into the pens, it is this outfit which sees the switch engine come along, shriek horribly and dissipate their herd to the four points of the compass and all the intermediate directions.

Anyone, you see, who thinks the cowboy does not earn his forty or forty-five dollars a month and board knows very little about it. In the old days it was easier for him. When he came in

NK WAS SO—WELL, SO DAMNABLY EFFICIENT!

AD AND DAISY BELL

THE ROPE CORRAL

BAPTISM BY FIRE

Photograph by Charles J. Belden, $\frac{Z}{T}$ Ranch, Pitchfork, Wyo

from the range he shod his horse, cleaned up, drew his pay and was free to go to the nearest town and spend it after his own fashion. But to-day he does his share of the ranch work also; breaks horses, builds and rides fences, wrangles, perhaps, even tries his unaccustomed hand at a bit of farming. But he will never be a farmer. If he could farm from the back of a horse he might succeed.

It was with this division of our outfit, then, that we started out early that morning. Even earlier the wagons had pulled out, taking with them our tents, in which were packed our extra garments, our cold creams and mirrors, our woolen pajamas and toothbrushes and combs, where, so far as I am concerned, most of them rested undisturbed until our return! Our nine cowboys rode ahead; they seemed to be in a hurry, and in the dust cloud behind them we trailed along.

I have a faint recollection that in some upper meadow we picked up our forty-odd loose horses; hazily, too, I recall seeing Lizzie and Dorothy at the start. But from that time on for some hours I was entirely absorbed in a personal matter of my own. The matter was this: were Pink and I going to see this thing through together, or were we not? Pink! The Artful Dodger was the only name for that cow pony, velvet-footed, straw-

berry-colored little son of the lightning that he was.

"He's a great little cow pony," said Irving—who is Little Bones—eying him proudly. "Why, that horse can turn on a dime and have a nickel left over."

"I dare say," I observed rather tartly. "But how about his turning on something and having me left over?"

"You just hold on," he said easily, "and leave the rest to him. Just indicate what cow you want and he'll get it. You don't have to worry."

"But I don't want any cow," I said. "I can't think of anything I want less."

However, as his animal, Alice Ann, at that moment gave every indication of breaking in two—which is an entirely too light-hearted term for bucking—I said nothing more.

Pink and I went on. We climbed and climbed. Overhead was Poker Jim Butte, named for that historic gentleman who played poker all winter without any luck and in March drew a pair of sixes and lost all he owned on them. Slowly we moved on and up; across creeks, up great sweeping upland parks bordered with trees, where the antelope lie in the heat of the day and the coyotes skulk at dawn and evening. Sixty horses and, perhaps, fifteen riders, and eighteen miles to climb. On and up. The creeks end and we are in the high

country. Over across are the buttes which mark the Indian reservation, glowing pink in the midday sun. We are hot and dirty, for there has been no rain and the cavvy ahead stirs up clouds of dust. On and up. Wild horses, called broomtails, come careening over the meadows, stop to look at us, then wheel and disappear over a ridge. On and up. Pink has picked out a bunch quitter of a blue roan and goes after him; in the wild dash I lose my Stetson, my hair net and hairpins and most of my sense of personal dignity, but I keep my saddle.

I begin to feel an affection for Pink, so gallant, so soft of foot, so—well, so damnably efficient. The same sort of affection the Head of the Family used to feel for a pair of ferrets after they had stopped biting holes in him.

Midday and boiling heat, and Irving beside me once more on Alice Ann. He leans over and pats the creature's neck.

"He's tricky," he said, "but he's a good horse."

"Why is he called Alice Ann?" I ask. My horsemanship is strictly limited to sitting my saddle under favorable conditions, but he does not look to me as though he should be called Alice Ann.

"Because that's his name," says Irving calmly.

It was, I think, the next day that Alice Ann, having submitted tamely enough to being roped

and saddled, attempted to dislodge Irving from the saddle in a series of wild rushes, squeals, rearings and kicks. And it was then I learned that Alice Ann was really Alizan, and that for several years before Irving began to gentle him he was a famous bucking horse in this part of the world.

But that is getting a trifle ahead. We are still, as I have mentioned before, going on and up. Pink has abandoned the blue roan for a buckskin loafer; my face is swollen with sunburn and my throat cracked with thirst; Lizzie is humped over the saddle and Dorothy has lapsed into a sort of fatalistic lethargy. We see a few cattle staring at us curiously, but we pass them by. Time to get them when this valley is being worked later.

The cowmen eye them.

"Look pretty good," they say, and move along.

Then at last the top of the world and a dip just beyond it. And in that dip are Dad and the wagons and the cook tent. Water from a good cold spring, too, and cold cream if one would go to the tent and hunt it out. But I am past caring for my skin. All I want is to lie under a tree on a cool bank, which keeps perfectly still and neither walks, trots nor canters, and drink water and drink and drink.

CHAPTER V

DAD was well set up. A long white tent covered the mess wagon, the stove and a long folding table. The steel range was banked with earth around its base and an asbestos ring protected the tent where the stovepipe went through it. Working at the board in the mess wagon was Dad himself, in spotless white and rolling out pie crust with a beer bottle filled, he assured me, with spring water!

For unlike Charley Russell, the cowboy artist, Dad can make pastry. Charley in the early days was cooking with an outfit and decided to try his hand at pies. The next day two of the dogs were dead and most of the men and the other dogs were laid out good and proper.

"So the old man," says Russell, "he came around to me, gentle-like but firm, and he says: 'You're a good boy, Charley, and we all like you. And you're a fair-to-middlin' cook, too, and I'm not complainin'. But in the future I'd be thankful if you'd stick to meat and potatoes, and for God's sake keep your hand off pastry!"

But we were not ready for Dad. The first duty on the range is to care for one's horse. One is a tenderfoot indeed who does not know how to un-

saddle, for instance, and where; to lay the saddle on its side, to fold the saddle blanket with the moist side in to keep it soft, and to place the bridle neatly on the top.

But the round-up has its own convention of unsaddling, at that. With the arrival of the bed wagon at the camp site, our wrangler had at once set up his rope corral. Tying the center of a long rope to one of the wagon wheels he had carried it out on crotched sticks until he had a circular rope inclosure with an open end, or gate, at one side. Our first duty, then, was to unsaddle outside this impromptu corral and to line up our saddles neatly near the entrance. But that day our horses were turned loose, and we stood by to watch them.

It is a poor heart which does not swell a bit when tired horses, freed of saddles or of packs, lie down to roll their weary bodies on the ground. And these Western horses have so little and work so hard; they must climb, carrying their burden of pack saddle or of man, up cliffs I would not dare to try afoot; must slide, with slipping rock and treacherous shale, down steep descents with every muscle tense. Only the pampered few can have grain; most of them have only grass and that what they can pick up for themselves. Yet so strong is the strain left by the early explorers, with their Spanish or Arabian animals, that these grass-fed range horses can outwork and outlast our eastern

thoroughbred stock. Only the fit have survived and bred, and the result is an extraordinary vitality, plus the intelligence of all creatures who have largely to fend for themselves.

So we stood by to watch them, first as they drank and then as they rolled. Standing in the little creek, some drank sedately; others, like naughty children, splashed and pawed the water, then lay down in it. Their thirst quenched, they rolled on the ground, scratching their sweaty, saddle-worn backs. Their sixty sets of legs were in the air at one time, all colors, all lengths. The hot sun shone on their gleaming shoes, clouds of dust rose above them, and like a chorus of relief came to our ears their gruntings, snorts and plaintive whinnyings. Yes, there is something wrong with us when it does not mean anything to see a tired horse roll upon the ground.

And now we have set our stage; the long cook tent, with the stovepipe rising through an asbestos ring in the canvas, and, at a discreet distance, our own tepees, white—and hot—in the sun; down the hill a bit, near the creek, the rope corral and the bed wagon; wood being cut and water drawn near by; and in the midst of the herd mounted men getting ready for the night. They drive the other loose horses to a green meadow near by, where the nighthawk will watch them, moving them slowly along toward higher ground and napping in his

saddle when they lie down, between, say, eleven-thirty and two. He will choose for this purpose a horse which can see well in the dark.

All night horses are carefully chosen for this ability, for there is a great difference in horses in this regard. I have ridden them when I could not see the ground beneath their feet, only to have them pick out the trail unerringly. But once or twice I have had animals who grew confused, who stumbled and hesitated, conveying to me their own helplessness and insecurity.

A horse is practically never wrong in his sense of direction. Again and again I have given one his head to test this out. But his instinct ends there. Unless he knows the road by experience, has actually traveled it, he will often lose it and start directly back, to bring one up unexpectedly at the edge of a rim-rock cliff, perhaps, or against the wire with no suspicion of a gate.

Only yesterday Prince and I had an argument on this matter. We had circled the top of the Red Cañon and were some thousand-odd feet above the ranch when twelve o'clock came. Now, at twelve o'clock hay is spread in one of the corrals for the horses. And Prince looked at me and said flatly that it was noon and lunchtime.

"Very well," I said. "Try it and see what you can do."

So I gave him his head and he threw his ears up

and started for the top of the cliff. Maybe he could have made it; I don't know. But I could not, and I told him so. And he sulked all the way round and down!

So below us the night horses are being hobbled and the preparations for the next day begin. Some of the men ride off to take a sort of general survey of the situation; Burton comes up on the little devil of a buckskin which provided considerable excitement during the whole period of the round-up. Burton is a "rep"—that is, he represents another outfit, his own, which also runs cattle here. As any round-up gathers in all the cattle to be found and then cuts out and brands its own calves, Burton is here to look after his own interests, to mark his own if any turn up, and generally to lend a hand when it is needed.

A cowboy from another outfit rides by, on his way over the divide, and announces a small forest fire a few valleys over.

"How far?" I ask languidly.

"Ten miles or so."

I subside again upon my back. It is too far; let it burn, or let somebody else put it out. Only let me stay where I am, to drink the lemonade Dad has made in a great tin pail, and to sit quiet on something which neither walks, trots nor canters.

Late that night I sat up in my tepee and made careful notes on the events of the day. My light

was a candle stuck in the top of an empty tomato can, my desk was my pillow, held on my lap. Somewhere in the bedding beneath me were my toilet articles, my fresh riding shirts and my pajamas. But I did not hunt them out. After a time I took off my hat and my boots and spurs and, putting my desk under my head, blew out the candle and went to sleep.

CHAPTER VI

"ROLL out!"

A stentorian voice was calling it over and over. I opened my eyes on black darkness; it was raw and cold and my blankets felt damp to my hands as I drew them up around me. I closed my eyes again and went to sleep.

Sometime later Dorothy spoke to me in a strong firm voice. I opened one eye and looked at her. It was gray outside by that time, and I could see that she had brushed her hair and her teeth and was looking smugly virtuous.

"What time is it?"

"A quarter to four. Hurry up!"

So I sat up in bed, pulled on my boots, shoved on my hat and was dressed. I did crawl around on my hands and knees looking for my toothbrush, but my efforts were half-hearted and I did not find it. Who ever heard of brushing teeth at a quarter to four in the morning anyhow?

"I'm coming," I said querulously. "But I haven't been up so early since the last time I was up so late."

I stood up. My boots were damp and shrunken from the dew; unreal shadowy figures were

standing around the cook tent, morose and dreary, and drinking hot coffee; and running in with the cavvy was Pink, undoubtedly rested after his sleep of from eleven-thirty to two, and ready at any minute to turn on a dime and have me left over.

Four o'clock. The horses had been driven into the rope corral, and the work of catching and saddling began. The wrangler held the gate, that loose end of the rope before referred to; under his direction only two men worked inside, and they worked quietly and cautiously. No wild throwing of the ropes now, but an easy cast from the ground. The noose rose and settled on the neck of the animal wanted. The horses milled, first this way and then that, and out of the mist and dust the captured bay, or roan, or buck, came mildly enough to be saddled just outside.

The first pink of the dawn touched Poker Jim; the old gambler had drawn a flush at last. The line of saddled horses grew; cinches were tightened, and chaps and spurs buckled on, followed by careful, easy mounting by the cowboys as they tested out horses, never too well broken and always fractious at this early hour; then full dawn, the soft creak of leather on leather, the faint musical jingling of spurs and the dull thud of horses' feet on the dry meadow as we moved off.

Percy was the leader. Riding the high circle, at the top of each valley he deployed two men, one to

throw the cattle down from the hillside, the other to bunch and hold them at the bottom. Technically, I believe every such bunching is a round-up, but the real round-up of the morning comes when all these smaller herds, driven in, are gathered together at same designated spot.

The men took the orders as they came, gathered up their reins, spurred their horses and disappeared. We rode on and on. After what I figured was high noon and lunchtime, I asked Lizzie to look at her wrist watch. She did so and then held it to her ear.

"It's stopped," she said. "It says six o'clock."

But it had not stopped!

Underneath me Pink moved sedately along. He had the air of an old hand at the business and of being slightly bored at the preliminaries. And I was growing increasingly easy. We had seen no cattle; maybe I was not to see any cattle. It was a fine morning; the sun warmed my back, and Pink's delicate tread was like a rocking-chair beneath me. I yawned. And then somehow or other I was riding down a valley with Irving, and Irving was glancing right and left for cattle, and Pink was gathering himself together and getting ready. Ready for what?

"Wha-what am I to do?" I inquired in a thin voice.

"You just sit tight," said Irving comfortably,

"and let Pink do it. He knows. Only watch him when he whirls. That's all."

Four hours later Irving and I drove our herd up the long slope to the rendezvous. There on the top of the hill were the other bunched cattle, milling wildly and emitting a sound not unlike the roaring of an angry sea. Our bunch saw them and tried to turn; in a second Pink started for them, and then and there did I give such an exhibition of pulling leather as I hope not to give again. He whirled and ducked, he flew and leaped, and to his back, helpless, I clung and prayed. And he did the job. He rounded up that stampeding herd and pointed it where it should go. And when it was over I let go the saddle horn, took my first full breath in five minutes and straightened my hat.

"Hey!" called a cowboy, as we moved on, "that's working them! How'd you like to join the outfit?"

"Oh, I'm learning," I said composedly.

I moved on. Lizzie and Dorothy were already back and stretched out under a tree.

"How far did you go?"

"Fifteen miles or so. How about you?"

"Oh, Irving and I took the big circle." Very, very casually. "Thirty miles or so, I believe."

Gently and gingerly, I got off Pink and laid me down on the ground. It was soft. It was wonderful. I closed my eyes. Bedlam was raging all

around, but I cared not. Cows were shrieking for their calves and as many calves were crying for their mothers. Two great Hereford bulls were facing each other, heads down, and pawing up small sandstorms of dust with their forefeet. Frantic animals were trying to dart out of the bunch and being run back by watchful herders.

Under ordinary circumstances I would have climbed the tree above me, but these were not ordinary circumstances. Let Pink step on me if he wanted to; let the bulls come and fight across me; let the whole darned herd stampede and run over me. I lay on the ground with one of Pink's reins under my head and closed my eyes. Sometime later I raised my voice above the turmoil and asked Lizzie the time.

"Ten o'clock," she said.

Ten o'clock, and I had lived a lifetime!

At first it was comparatively easy. Irving did the work and I rode along. He would ride up a coulee or small valley above the cattle and then with a shrill cry start them down to me. It was my business—and Pink's—to see that they did not run past me, but headed on in the direction we were going.

But as time went on and our little herd increased, so did the attempts of the bunch quitters. With sudden resolution, they would dart out from the rest, turn and beat it. And if anyone believes

that a two-year-old steer cannot run, I am here to set him right. Naturally, the only way to head him off is to run faster than he does, and here Pink got in his best work. Seizing the bit firmly in his teeth and disregarding my pleas to let Irving do it, Pink was off. Into washes and out again, skirting gopher holes, jumping rocks, Pink carried me madly after his quarry. And in the end the creature would succumb; would turn meekly back after the others and I would release my death grip on the reins and mop my streaming face.

As time passed on, however, I grew more cheerful. No cow as yet had pointed at me with dire intent her long and deadly horns; no bull had lowered his head and roared. To be honest, I had seen no bull at all. To all intents and purposes our herd was purely a matriarchy and our calves were fatherless.

And then, suddenly, the worst came. Irving, above me in a valley, called that there were cattle hidden in a dry creek bed below. The creek bed was like a cañon; Pink slid and scrambled down into it, and between its high and unclimbable banks we moved along. The cattle were hidden beyond a bend, and around this bend we went.

And there, without warning, we came face to face with an enormous bull. He looked as large as a locomotive, and he was barring the way with his wives and children behind him.

Photo by Charles J. Belden, $\frac{Z}{T}$ Ranch, Pitchfork, Wyo.

Photo by Charles J. Belden, $\frac{Z}{T}$ Ranch, Pitchfork, Wyo.

HE LOOKED AS LARGE AS A LOCOMOTIVE

The moment he saw me he lowered his head and began to paw the ground! And there we were!

I attempted to turn Pink around, but he refused to turn. Instead he tried to make for the creature, and it pawed the ground again and stared at me with red and horrible eyes. I moistened my dry lips and spoke to it in a small faint voice.

"Go on!" I said. "Get along there!"

"Just an inch nearer!" said the bull in effect. "Just one inch!"

"Irving!" I called feebly. "Irving!"

But he did not hear, and Pink was tugging at the bit, and the cows had set up a sort of melancholy chorus. I tried other tactics; I spoke gently and kindly.

"Go along," I said. "Nice old fellow! Go along, like a good boy!"

I even whistled; I cannot really whistle, but I have a small faint pipe I use to call the dogs, and when I could pucker my trembling lips I tried that. But the whistle after all did the work, for while it had no appreciable effect on the bull, Pink took it as a signal and dashed at him. And the craven creature instantly threw up his tail and started off. Some few minutes later I rode up out of the creek bed, driving my monster and his harem before me. And Irving, waiting on the bank, surveyed my catch with approval.

"Made quite a pick-up," he said.

I nodded.

"Took a little time," I said easily. "That creek bed's a poor place to work."

Our bunch was augmented gradually and as it increased it grew more unwieldy. Almost any cover served as a refuge. But I had a lesson in patience from Irving as he followed them into the bogs and creek bottoms, the thorny thickets and swales where they tried to hide themselves.

"Get along there, little feller," he would say to some fugitive in his soft Southern voice. Never did he frighten them, or push them too fast. He watched the calves, too, and in that last four dreadful miles of creek bottom, bog and heavy low-growing trees he worked them through without haste and without the loss of a single animal.

Out of all the other valleys, converging to the high rendezvous, moved other bunches and other cowboys. The broiling sun glared down, the calves bawled, the mothers wailed, the horses worked and sweated.

And at last ten o'clock and dinnertime, and just a third of the day's work over. Another circle in the afternoon and branding after that, and then—and only then—the tarp bed on the ground and sleep, until a voice roars the call to "Roll out" and, long before day, another day begins.

CHAPTER VII

We branded that evening. That is, the men branded, Pink and I remaining interested onlookers outside the log corral. Once indeed we took a part; a calf escaped, leaping the gate and starting with extreme rapidity for parts unknown. In a weak moment I started after it, but the last I saw of it it was headed for the Cheyenne Reservation and like the darky in the war, if it had had a feather in its hand "it would have flew." Curiously enough, a calf which loses its mother will always go back to the last place where it suckled; as the mother does the same thing there is practically no such thing as a lost calf.

But, generally speaking, we were onlookers. At this particular spot there was a rough log corral, and the branding was somewhat simplified by that fact. Corral, or no corral, however, the procedure is essentially the same.

While we had been having supper, then, at four o'clock, the herders had been busy cutting out the cows with unbranded calves and driving off the rest. Gladly enough they went back to their coulees and creek bottoms again, leaving behind them those who were to have their baptism of fire.

This smaller herd, lowing and anxious, now awaited us at the top of a hill about two hundred yards from the ancient log corral.

The branding irons had been brought out from the rack in the bed wagon, and inside the corral a fire had been built. These irons generally consist at the branding end of a quarter circle, a full circle and a bar. When, as with the Rocking Chair outfit, a special brand is used, that outfit carries it, and the others, picking up a Rocking Chair calf and mother, do their best with the tools at hand to etch a rocking-chair on the calf's side! Thus, picking up a Skull and Crossbones calf, we did a fair job with the full circle for a skull and two bars for the crossed bones.

But although the corral was ready for the cattle, the cattle were not yet in it. And this proved to be a difficult and delicate operation. Wide-spreading jaws or wings of logs reached out from the inner circle, and the cattle moved docilely enough until these were reached. Behind them the line of mounted cowboys, moving slowly, was closing in on them. Ahead of them was the opening into the corral. The lead cow would stop, gaze about and nine times out of ten make a bolt for freedom, and the entire bunch would follow suit. But the inexorable line of horsemen waited behind, and gaps were instantly closed. As the jaws of the Y narrowed, the men were riding shoulder to shoul-

der, and the cattle were quietly pushed inside the corral. Then the logs were placed across the entrance and the work began.

One man roped the calves from his horse and dragged them out. Two other men waited to throw them and a fourth brought the branding iron. The mother's brand was called and the calf similarly marked.

That night I was too weary to sleep. I sat in my tepee as before, the pillow on my knee, my candle in its can perilously near me, and made my notes. Then I blew out my candle and sliding along the ground at last found that slight hollow for the hip bone which is my camping substitute for springs and hair mattress.

The outfit slept. Somewhere to the east of us, the nighthawk was watching the horses, grazing them slowly along and nodding wearily in his saddle as he rode. Two to a bed for warmth, the cowboys lay in the open, their gear piled beside them on the ground. The night wind blew through the pine trees. And over the hill a coyote barked. From the cook tent below there came a regular, sonorous sound like the slow monotonous beating of a war drum far away. But it was not a war drum; it was Dad, his long body rolled in his blankets, comfortably and unconsciously baying at the moon.

CHAPTER VIII

THE round-up goes on. Day after day, other valleys are circled, new cows and calves are bunched and driven out. The camp moves, the mess and bed wagons jolting along until the pilot has picked out a new camp site and dug out the spring.

Behind the outfit, as it moves, are left the marked and counted cattle. They move placidly down the slopes, the bulls as haughty as ever, the cows each guarding a newly branded and slightly dazed calf. They will not be disturbed again until the beef round-up in the early fall. Then will come the cutting out of the meat animals and the long drive to the railroad. The men will ride in clouds of dust; the cattle will move slowly, roaring and calling, ready to stampede at any surprise. At night the guards will slowly circle them, singing to keep them quiet and riding out a bit to light their cigarettes. And then, after days and days, the railroad and the cattle pens. And Percy, perhaps, pointing them in, and once again, as always, the switch engine will come along and whistle, and there will be panic and a stampede.

Yes, it's a great life, and it is still going on out here. The cowboy is not passing, nor will he so

long as there is left to him a bit of open range. Discouraged he may be, but he is no quitter. If he is picturesque, he is picturesque only in the line of duty. His chaps protect his clothes in swales and thorny brush, his Stetson shades his eyes and its heavy high crown protects his head from the burning sun, his neckerchief is less trouble than a collar and tie.

He is a specialist in his own line. And it is no child's play, this business of his. Take the matter of the nights alone, when the beef herd is being rounded up for shipping in the fall. The cattle are nervous. After months or years of freedom they are close herded, and they are filled with suspicion and fear. At six o'clock, the second day shift turns them over and the slow movement to the bed ground begins. A few men graze them along to some high selected spot, and at eight the night guards go on.

Is is a spooky business, this night guarding; almost anything will stampede the herd and wreck the work of days. Not only that, but it is a desperate business to be caught by a stampede, horse and rider swept along in the darkness by a thousand or several thousand maddened on-rushing animals.

The night guards work in two-hour shifts, two at a time. They circle outside the herd in opposite directions, frequently singing to quiet it. Even

such a matter as lighting a cigarette is a ticklish one. The guard turns out a bit from the herd to do it, and closes one eye so he may have a good eye ready to see in the dark the moment his match goes out. Never can his vigilance relax. Perhaps a storm is threatening and each deadly horn carries a glowing ball of light upon it! And then let the storm break, and the man who lost a bass drum isn't in it with the night guard who loses a thousand or so of beef cattle.

One night guard I know had this happen to him. He rode around and finally he located a group of them huddled together on the crest of a hill. All night long he rode around them in the storm, singing soothingly to quiet them, until the break of day showed them to be a heap of gray volcanic rocks!

A highly specialized business. How would you lean if you were swimming on horseback across a swift and flooded river? Upstream, wouldn't you? I know I would. But you and I would be wrong; you lean downstream to counterbalance the pull which threatens to take your horse's legs from under him. And what would you do if, when you had piled your clothes on the saddle and were swimming across holding to your horse's tail, the horse got away on the other side? But this requires no specialized knowledge! Suppose again, like Percy, you were pointing a bunch of steers

and injudiciously roped a coyote? And the whole angry thousand of them took after that coyote?

Ho hum; it's a great life if you don't weaken.

The cowboy passing? Nonsense. There is a lot of bosh being talked about it, and a lot of sickly sentimentality about our rodeos. With the single exception of bull-dogging steers, the rodeo simply represents a life that is going on today all over the Northwest. And I have even seen it necessary to bulldog a steer in order to throw him, when there was no room for a man and horse to operate.

The worst horse in any rodeo is no worse than the buckskin Burton rode at this same round-up. Every time he was mounted he went crazy, and a crazy horse loose in such surroundings is an exciting matter. He is blind with rage, and no one can tell in what direction he is coming next. The other horses share his excitement; the milling in the corral increases. The saddle animals get out of his way, as do the men. There is nothing to be done; either the man on his back rides it out or he does not.

Take Alizan, with a rope around his neck to supplement the usual bridle. Once or twice he, too, went on a man-killing expedition; but notice the curious humanity of these cowboys. Irving rode it out on the rope rather than on the bridle, to save the creature's mouth! And when it was over he got off and rubbed the demon's head!

"You're all right now, little feller, aren't you?" he said gently and mounted again.

And take Jack. I find I cannot write very much about Jack. You see, it was only a week ago. His horse came back alone from the early morning wrangling, and when Reed found him he was lying unconscious on the ground in the big upper meadow.

They carried out a mattress and brought him in, but his back was broken.

Ah me! Sad things have been happening to us this year. First, there was Johnny—but we try not to think about that, and then Bruce, and now Jack.

But we cannot change things. So long as the beef herds continue to graze in their quiet valleys we shall have the cowboy. The wagons will pull out, the pilot at their head; the nighthawk will keep his solitary vigil; and men will don their chaps and spurs, and mounting their uncertain horses, round up the cattle that we may have our beef. It is their life. They want no other. Bruce Brockett, our cowboy poet, nursing his badly broken leg in the hospital at Sheridan, speaks for them, inarticulate as they are, when he says:

When the last bit of range is fenced up and gone,
And progress has had her say;

When the last ol' moss horn is put on the cars,
And the honyok at last get his way,*

When the last ol' broomtail is drove in from the hills,
And the last long circle is rode,
When the last guard is stood with shivers and chills,
When the last herd's ready to load,

When the last gun is toted on the hip of a "hand"
And the last cowboy yell is yelled;
When the last outlaw horse in all the land
Is cornered, 'nd beat, 'nd corralled,

When the last chuck wagon is under the shed
And the last cow-punch draws his pay;
I'll be ready, O Lord, and if I ain't dead,
Please take me anyway.

*Honyok. A homesteader.

BOOK V

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

CHAPTER I

IT had been my plan to spring my experience at a dinner party. Not too large a dinner; one sufficiently small so that a slightly raised voice might be heard by all. And so I picked my dinner and made my announcement, but as somebody brought up the Prohibition question just then nobody heard me but a quiet man on my right.

"So you have been flying?" he inquired politely.

"Yes," I said. "Several times, as a matter of fact. I have even done some stunt flying."

"Really!"

His interest led me on. I needed little encouragement, and so for some time I discoursed volubly on aëronautics. I said, I remember, that there is a wonderful thrill about the Immelman turn and the falling leaf only perhaps equaled by the tail spin, but that for real rest without excitement, a sort of aërial vacation, I preferred long-distance flying. One came down so rested and refreshed. One felt akin to the birds. One has

communed alone with the clouds and been a little sister of the sun. One has wiped off the earth dust for a few hours and breathed the ether of the high places. One—but he was only politely listening. I felt that at least a part of his mind was being devoted to light wines and beer.

So I said:

"Have you ever been up?"

"Oh, yes," he affirmed, rather flatly.

"I flew a hundred and fifty miles once," I told him. "Have you ever tried that?"

"Well, I have, rather."

"Where?"

"The last time, I flew down to Panama."

Well, he might have said that at the beginning and saved me a lot of trouble. He was one of our army's crack fliers, but how was I to know that? If people in our services would only wear their uniforms it would be helpful. As it is now, I had only just learned to tell a General's insignia from a Captain's when they took off the whole business, except for Decoration Day and military funerals; and then they come out smelling of moth balls.

But now I am going to have an audience for those flying stunts of mine, where nobody can cut in and say in a bored voice that his last trip in the air was around the world. What is more, I am going to be the one unprofessional ex-passenger in an airplane to tell the truth about how I felt

about it. But remember, I am not going to knock it. It is a great thing. It has come to stay. The time is almost here when we are going to stand out on the front lawn and scan the sky for our returning husbands at the evening hour, and have our monograms in electric lights on the roof so that the children can find their way home from dances or the movies. And we women will have little vanity cases in our smart little ships—that is a professional touch, that "ships"; aviators always say it—and buy air clothes instead of airy ones.

Do you think this is a dream of the future? All right. Watch the next few years. I can remember when a young man in my neighborhood took the family buggy and odd parts of an old express wagon—and probably the household teakettle, for he ran his engine by steam—and made a vehicle which scared the neighborhood doctor's horse over a fence and stalled on all the car tracks. When that young man stopped inventing and went to the Spanish War everyone went in and congratulated his mother on his improved chances of life.

The airplane is past that stage, of course. It's now, relatively, where the automobile was when one climbed three steps in the rear and got in between the two back seats. But it is with us tonight, and we may as well acknowledge it.

Why, when I had done a bit of flying and telephoned to a department store for a woman's airplane coat they sent me one in a half hour, by a boy on a motor cycle!

And it is a matter of family record that once when going west to make a moving picture the studio telegraphed me to the train:

"Do you object to baby blimp meeting you at railroad station? Safer than taxicab."

To which I replied with a directness and clearness equal to that of the original message:

"Greatly object to baby blimp meeting me at station. Much prefer taxicab."

But as they had already applied for permission to bring the baby dirigible into town, they got the front page of the newspapers about it anyhow, which may possibly have been what they wanted.

But the plain truth is that no individual has yet came out, to my knowledge, and stated exactly how he felt on his first air flight, or before it. In fact, a form of genteel mendacity has become current, especially by the ones who shut their eyes the moment they hop off and never open them again until they get back, and who never draw a full breath until the pilot stops the engine and says: "Well, how was it?"

They release their stiffened fingers from the sides of the fusilage, which they have been clutching with frenzy, breathe, swallow, look

Photograph by Clarence Bull

LOOKING YOUNGER THAN I FEEL—OR AM

ON MY WORD OF HONOR I'M IN THE THING!

round at the glorious solid earth, only five feet beneath them, and say: "Glorious! I felt like a bird. It is simply indescribable. The most exquisite calm! And that sense of freedom!"

They then crawl out and look down to see if the shaking of their knees is noticeable.

"I'll be round tomorrow for another little jaunt," they say. "How much are the blooming things anyhow? If I can persuade the family, and you don't want a million dollars for it, I may buy a little bus."

The pilot then unfastens the buckle of the enthusiast's helmet, because the latter's fingers are trembling too much; and he goes out and crawls into his automobile and rehearses all the way home how he is going to spring his heroic adventure on his friends. But he does not go back to the flying field. He takes another road so as not to pass it and be hailed and taken up on another joy-ride.

CHAPTER II

It is perfectly understandable. We have not, either by heredity or training, any natural inclination for flying. It is an acquired taste. Man takes to the air about as normally as a fish does, only he can be trained to it and the fish cannot. It is, of course, quite true that some people have no fear from the beginning, but they are, generally speaking, the lymphatics, the unimaginative folk who have no temperament and little imagination. They do not make the best flyers, however. They are not quick thinkers, and flying takes head work. Of course in time it becomes more or less automatic, like driving a car, a matter of the spinal cord rather than the brain.

I have been up four times. On my fourth time up I made a long-distance flight of 150 miles. Before this is published I shall probably have been up a number of times.

(Author's Note: This was written some time ago. I have never been up since!)

At this moment my leather coat, helmet and goggles are lying on a chair. And if tomorrow is a good day—— I like it when I am in the plane; really like it. But it still

takes all the moral courage I've got to get me in. I'm cursed with imagination. My eyes pick out the airplane casualties in the morning paper with a sort of fatal facility. I ride in a motor, but I can read calmly and courageously of automobile mishaps. I can read of drownings and then swim in deep water with a stroke of my own, which sets swimming instructors crazy, and show no violent terror. I can read of a family laid by the heels with cold-storage turkey, and go out fearlessly and order a cold-storage turkey and digest it without a qualm.

But I cannot understand the psychology of the aviator. Once I saw a pilot starting out, and if he kissed anyone good-bye I did not notice it. He tucked a bathing suit into the machine, put on a helmet and a pair of goggles, said he was going to the beach for a swim, and got in. I was dazzled by his aplomb. I sat in the security of my automobile and faced the facts. I was afraid to go up. I had done a good many rash things in my life, but I was afraid. A good many people thought I was a brave woman, but they did not know that I was afraid of cows. To the world at large I was a dauntless woman, without nerves.

It was perfectly clear that I would have to fly, not at once, but sometime. Next month. Or next year.

I remember coming home from the early months of the Great War, with what is now the commonplace story of shells and No Man's Land. Partly by accident, partly by not wanting to show the white feather, I had had rather a thrilling time.

I had, before I went abroad, been learning to drive a car. I hold the record as the only woman in my town who ever mounted a curbstone in a machine, ran it along the pavement inside two trees and a telegraph post, and out again onto the street without mishap—but also without intention.

On my return, therefore, it behooved me to back that car out of the garage, giving it a twist to avoid the flower garden and another twist to avoid taking off a fender. I waited until I was alone. Then taking my courage in my hands I approached the monster. I was very uneasy in my mind, but the gardener was there, so I commenced operations with the *sang-froid* of a woman who had been to war and had a reputation to uphold. I started the thing, gripped the wheel, let in the clutch and shot forward as if I had been fired out of a gun. I smashed the gardener's potting bench, all the spring tomato plants, ruined a bicycle and narrowly escaped going through the rear wall.

"Got into the wrong gear," I observed to the gardener with a sickly smile. "All right now."

I then got into reverse, backed out, crumpled

a mud guard, took a six-inch panel off the door and fetched up in a bed of early peonies.

But I conquered that car in the end. Now here was something else. Heavens, life was just one thing after another! By the time I'd learned to like flying probably parachuting would have come in, and we would have natty little parachute bags to carry round, and I would have to prove my courage by slipping off into space to make an afternoon call. It is really a dreadful time in which to live.

However, the way that aviator went off to take a swim had impressed me. I began to play with the thought of how I would look debonairly stepping into one of the death traps. Hands in pockets I would saunter up to the thing, cast a professional eye over it, leap in and be gone. When I came down I would be met by a number of newspaper men, who would ask me if there was anything I was afraid to do; and if so, what?

However, I only dramatized myself getting in and getting out. In between was a dark gulf, a bottomless abyss, where my imagination scared like a frightened pup and crawled under the porch.

One day passing a shop in town I saw some leather airplane coats for women. They were selling airplane coats for women. Therefore other women flew. Was I going to let other

women fly while I remained a craven, earth-rooted?

Yes, I was. I had a family. Not for my sake, but for the family's, I must relinquish the thought of adventure. The family was pretty tired of watching me prove to outsiders how brave I was. The family knew. They knew I turned on all the lights below before I went downstairs at night, and that I consider every cow in a field a steer until proved otherwise. I put it on the family for several days. I would probably be doing it yet, but one day I met a man who was a part owner of that aviation field and its deadly trio.

And he said: "You've done all sorts of things, so I suppose you've been up too?"

"No," I replied, "I haven't. It's odd, isn't it? I've had one or two arrangements made at various times, but something always happened."

I did not know about his owning stock in that company or I would have made a different reply. I might have mentioned heart trouble.

"Well!" he said, "we'll just fix that. How about going up tomorrow morning?"

I broke into a clammy sweat.

"Fine," I replied. "I'm perfectly mad to do it! At what time?"

Now I am going to say this about that man. He owned stock in the company, and he was a thoroughly nice person, but I learned later on that

he had never been up himself. I got even with him. Before a large crowd on a Sunday afternoon I urged him to try it. And because he hated to seem afraid and didn't think of having a heart lesion, he had to do it. He said when he came down that it was the most wonderful experience of his life, but he hasn't been up since.

CHAPTER III

I WAS awake very early the next morning. I wakened with a half-conscious sense of something wrong, and after a time I remembered. My riding clothes, neatly laid out on a chair, reminded me. Somewhere the wretched youth who was going to take me up was probably splashing in a shower bath and singing, and equally calm and cheerful mechanics were eating ham and eggs, preparatory to putting gas and oil into the airplane for what might be its last flight. I rang for coffee and lay back trying to remember exactly what the Secretary of War told me was the low percentage of casualties counted by flying hours.

But I had a moment of hope too. It was foggy. I considered that no aviator in his senses would go up in that fog. I lay back and read the morning paper. Half of the first column dealt with an airplane crash the day before.

When the Japanese boy brought in the coffee I said hopefully: "I'm afraid it's going to be a bad day."

He replied with the calmness of a people which commits hari-kari as complacently as we have our

tonsils out. "It clear up all right," he said. "Fine day. Forgot spoon. Come back soon."

He then departed, and left the world to sadness and to me. Shortly after that the field called up and said the fog would lift soon and to come right along. We would hop off at nine o'clock.

I dressed very carefully. If anything happened I felt it only due to my reputation to pass out with all my buttons on, and in my best silk stockings. I had also had a shampoo and a manicure. I meant to be a tidy corpse.

Everyone at the field was very cheery. They held out a little book for me to sign, however, exonerating them from all responsibility in case of trouble. They said it was a mere formality, because they had never had any trouble and didn't expect any. But as I now had an audience I signed it as casually as I would a club check.

Here is a curious thing about courage. It comes quite often by pretending one has it. It is a sort of acting in which one gets very thoroughly into the part. And the calmness of my pilot cheered me. He was a blithe young man who gave no evidence of having made his last will and testament. He did not seem to be saying farewell to life. He pointed out the fine lines of the machine and patted it a bit, as if he liked it.

"Fine little ship," he said. "Going to have a great ride. Mind the fog?"

"Not a bit," I observed in a brave loud voice.

"All right," he said. "Get in yourself?—or need help?"

I was now smiling, but the smile was slightly set.

"No help, thank you."

I then watched him get in and made an attempt to follow. But he was twenty-three and I am—well, I am not. I needed help. Afterward I learned the trick of it, and I can now get in with quite a professional swing. Indeed I do it so well—especially if there is a crowd round, that I quite give the impression, in case of the pilot swooning, of being able to crawl over and—you know: "The daring woman, seeing death below, crept forward, inch by inch, until the precious lever was within her grasp. With a quick jerk——"

I was now in and tightly strapped. The pilot was saying "Contact" ever and anon, and somebody was cranking the propeller. There was a terrific noise and wind. We were moving. Farewell, earth. Farewell, sweet life. Farewell, family. Ah, if only they knew that while they still slept peacefully I was bound on this desperate enterprise!

Off the earth! Actually off the earth! Not very far off, but off. Heavens, will we miss those

trees? We do. Well, this isn't so bad. One might live through it.

The pilot looks back at me and points a hand below; I am to look down. I don't want to look down. I might upset the thing. Anyhow, I can't turn my head. Every muscle is rigid. The pilot looks back again. Great Scott, why doesn't the boy watch where he is going? He points up this time. There is a hole in the clouds, and we are making for it, exactly like hitting a hole in shrubbery or a gate in a fence. I would rather look up than down, so I watch that.

That is enough of the present tense. It makes hard reading.

We struck the hole and went through. Another machine had followed us up. It contained a man with a camera, behind the pilot. And therewith hangs a tale.

I began to relax, bit by bit. The white ocean of clouds below shut off the earth, and I now released my frenzied grasp of the fuselage and found I could turn my head. I wasn't enjoying it but I was enduring it, and I was still alive. The other car was now very close, and the camera was focused on us! I waved to show how easy I felt, but cautiously, because I didn't want to overbalance anything.

Now one thing I had always known: So long as the engine runs one is safe. It is when it stops

that one dies. I had therefore a vision, the moment the roaring ceased, of crashing to earth and being the aforesaid tidy remains. The engine stopped.

Farewell, clouds. Farewell, sweet life. Farewell——

"Great up here, isn't it?" said the pilot.

Merciful powers! He had shut off the engine for a bit of conversation!

"Fine!" I said with stiff lips.

He started the engine again.

The other plane kept hanging round, for pictures. At times the wings almost touched. But I was growing calm. I had bethought me of the clever idea of writing a note or two while in the air, subsequently mailing them to admiring friends. I now did so, for my consummate desire to pose as calm under trying circumstances still obsessed me. I should like to see those notes sometime. Once at the Front in France I undertook to make a record of events during an air bombardment. I felt very cool, but the next day this is what I read:

"Town is now being bombarding by sixteen aeroplanes. Sixty sick bombs have already fallen."

The pilot shut off the engine again, turned and said something. But by that time I was deaf with

the altitude and the noise. I was enjoying it, so I nodded a vigorous "Yes."

What he had really asked me was if I would like to do some stunts!

When I realized it I was too late. He waved an arm to the camera man, and speeded up his engine, stopped it and—horrors, we were turning over! We turned clear over, and I said the shortest and briefest prayer of my life.

One would think that that was enough—but no, not at all. We turned entirely over the other way. Then for fear the camera man hadn't got it we did it again. Both ways. Then we did a few other trifles, such as a tail spin and so on. That pilot didn't have any inner ears to set spinning. He ate it up. His very back said: "Watch this!"

The camera man said later it made him dizzy to watch us. Well, he hadn't anything on me.

When we were level once more the pilot turned again.

"Want to do some more?" he asked.

I was doing some quick lip reading by that time, and I said "No." I said I had loved it; it was the greatest experience of my life. I didn't see how people got through life without it. But I wasn't any pig about it. I'd get along as it was. I'd manage somehow.

After that cataclysm straight flying was so simple and felt so safe that I enjoyed it. The Cali-

fornia summer landscape; brown meadows, with green oases where the faithful garden sprinkler had labored; the moving-picture studios, where during weekdays I was struggling to learn the technique of a new art; the palatial residences of those moving-picture actors who were later on to condescend to leave their happy homes for me and to spend a brief time daily trying to show in six reels what it had taken me a year to write—all these were below me.

I had looked up at those stars in their canvas firmament until my neck ached. Now I looked down.

But the pilot wasn't through. Dear me, no! We were now going to see how low we could go without hitting a fence. Until that time we had not seemed to be going fast, but now——

Some time later after I had made a safe landing and gone back to the hotel, stopping ever and anon on the verandas to state modestly that I had been flying, the family came in from riding. I did not tell them at once. I waited, as a child will with a piece of candy. I felt patronizing, benevolent and slightly headachey.

"Well," they said, "d'you know what happened just now? We met a surveyor in the road, and what d'you think? A couple of darned fools in an airplane nearly took off his head in a bean

field, and his horse ran away. He's still hunting it."

Never until now have I acknowledged my complicity.

CHAPTER IV

THE moment the novice gets his feet on solid earth he is willing to go up again. He feels so awfully safe then, and he forgets his fright, like a toothache. This condition lasts for about two hours. So it was that in that two hours I agreed to go up the next day. Overnight reflection rather altered this, but I had said I would. And I did.

It was at this time that I got in my revenge on the gentleman who owned stock in the company. It was a Sunday, and a large, interested but determinedly earth-bound crowd was on the field. Partly curiosity. Partly to see Charlie Chaplin go up.

Now Mr. Chaplin is a great artist, a real artist, and a charming young man. But he is about as fond of flying as he is of cholera morbus. He flies a great deal. But he is like all great artists, including myself! He has imagination. He likes it when he is up, but he hates the start. Or if he doesn't he pretends to. The crowd was divided between pride and anxiety when he got in. He is a sort of national good-cheer asset, and they didn't want to lose him.

Mr. Chaplin went up, and the gentleman who

had urged me to my first flight was still on the ground. Before the crowd, then and there, I urged on him the beauties of the upper air, the sense of moving like a bird through the blue empyrean, and so on. And the crowd waited and grinned.

His eyes took on a hunted look, and at last he said: "Oh, all right. Get me a helmet, somebody."

He got in, after ferociously signing his name in the anti-responsibility book. But before he moved off he said something to me.

"Look here," he said. "I've had a couple of wisdom teeth to be pulled for about six months. D'you mind taking me to the dentist's to-morrow?"

I had by now got that swing of the right leg which clears the back of the pit and gives a truly professional touch. I had done stunts. I had nearly killed a surveyor and made a horse run away. What was left? Had I had my last thrill? Was there nothing further? There was.

About to leave the field I mentioned my intention of motoring the next day a hundred and fifty miles to a more southern city.

"Motor?" they said. "Why don't you fly down?"

Good heavens, were these people insatiable? Wasn't enough enough? But then something entered my mind. By a long-distance flight I would

have it all over a certain member of my family who had once looped the loop. Besides, I was by that time beginning to like flying. Also there was a crowd round. Also I had that peculiar sense of safety that comes after a flight, with one's feet planted solidly on the ground.

Of course I would do it. And I would buy me one of those leather airplane coats in the shop window—instead of the coat belonging to the large pilot with an eighteen neck that I had been wearing—and get some real pictures. I did not mention photographers of course. I trusted to the field's publicity instinct. And I was right. They had any number of still photographers on the field the next morning. And a camera man with a movie camera; and I had the coat. I held up the flight with iron determination until I got that coat.

I was prepared to break the news very gently to those junior members of the family who had gone West with me. But to my surprise they showed no anxiety whatever.

They were, on the contrary, rather peevish about it.

"Do you mean to say," they exclaimed, "that you are going to fly there, and let us go in a poky old automobile?"

"Wh-what do you mean?" I asked.

Well, they wanted to fly too. They wanted another ship. Failing that they would sit on the

wings. They'd hang on somehow. But I balked. They were young. They had their lives to live. I had lived considerably longer. I wouldn't do it. But to this day they have not quite forgiven me for the stiff necks they got at the other end of the flight watching for mother to shoot out of space and land at their feet.

I was extremely calm that day. I sat all morning on the veranda of the hotel and waited for the coat and listened to a charming young man who had bought a ship of his own and was learning to pilot it. He told me about the various ways of crashing and about interesting things that had happened to men he knew in airplanes. I took a look at myself at a quarter to twelve, and I was wearing a sort of fixed grin, with my eyes sunk deep in my head. I had by that time decided that the propeller would probably drop off. It was the worst thing I could think of, so I fixed on that.

To ease my mind I ordered a luncheon to eat aloft. There was, I think, a sort of reluctant admiration in the hotel clerk's eyes when I gave the order. I ordered plenty. But I forgot it entirely when the time came to go, and I finally went up with a sandwich and a banana, the luncheon of one of the mechanics at the field.

The head of my moving-picture company had come to see me. He shook hands three times with me and observed that I was a brave woman. I

immediately became a brave woman, and indicated that the whole thing was a mere bagatelle. Then I signed the book again, and some businesslike person in the crowd asked if I had taken out any insurance lately, as some of the recent policies have an anti-flying clause. I then discovered that if this trip was successful it would inaugurate a passenger-carrying schedule. If?

Now I've undertaken to be honest. At the end of three or four hours in the air I looked at my watch. It had been seven minutes. I held like mad to my luncheon, because it might fall out and get caught in something and cause all sorts of damage. Once the sandwich slipped, and my heart almost stopped.

The propeller ahead obsessed me. Suppose it flew off! There were defects in steel every now and then. And how about catching fire? Hot gusts from the engine came back occasionally. Where was the gasoline tank? The pilot was in front of me, and kept looking over the edge. Why? Was anything wrong?

But after a half hour or so I began to relax. We were following the coast line, and I tried to find us on the map. The sun was hot, and far below and very small our shadow moved over the landscape, up hill and down, across plowed fields and dry river beds. The coast line was brown, the sea very blue and outlined with white stationary

lines, which was the surf. The roar of the engine through the heavy helmet was soothing. The propeller seemed inclined to stay with us. My leaning over to look down did not seem to endanger our equilibrium. I felt hungry and a little drowsy.

Heavens, what was that? The ship shook, tilted one way and then the other, and dropped what seemed to be a quarter of a mile. It picked up, dropped again, trembled. Air holes. The pilot, whom I had suspected of napping, showed vigilance in the very back of his head. We rode through, and he turned round, smiled and pointed below. We were going over a range of bare precipitous hills and the air currents were uncertain.

I sat back again, and my mind wandered to those boys in France who had known this loneliness of the upper air and who had gone out, like knights of old, to solitary combat. What did they think of as, with every cloud a possible lurking place for an enemy, they sailed through those lonely spaces, eternally vigilant, eternally facing death? And I wondered then, and I wonder now, as I look over this great country, if we are quite worth the sacrifices they made.

I looked below and tried to imagine that peaceful terrain crumbled with bombardment, traced with trenches, filthy, sodden with blood, and

buried in it those blind heroic souls for whom the air man was the eyes; and again I wondered.

After a time, everything seeming calm and the pilot still unexcited, I decided to eat. There were two olives stuck in the top of the sandwich, and I began on them. Almost immediately I was faced with the problem of what to do with the pits. Throw them overboard? But what if they stuck in something? Wasn't even a small flying bird apt to wreak havoc with a propeller? And what if some law of suction, of which I knew nothing, drew them into the engine? I debated, but it was no time to take chances. I put them in my pocket.

Then I ate the banana, because I was tired of holding onto it. But here I faced the problem of garbage disposal. Suppose, for instance, that this thing became common, and airplanes overhead were as frequent as flivvers on a Sunday afternoon. And suppose they all took lunches and threw overboard the empty pop bottles and the tin cans and the wooden platters and a broken cup or two and emptied out the coffee grounds from above. No; I was a pioneer; I must set a good example. I put the banana skin in my pocket.

The remains of the sandwich, which was horrible, I held firmly to the end.

CHAPTER V

FEELING by that time extremely professional I decided to make a few notes on the landscape. Also I wanted to work in a paragraph or two on the delightful aspect of things from above. But I discovered, what every pilot knows, that the earth from above is, as to all points near enough for observation, a plane of two dimensions only, length and width. The airplane seemed to represent the only excursion into the third dimension. After a time one learns to see things beneath, but at first all the old standards fail. I don't know to this moment whether certain moving specks were cows or chickens, whether certain boats were gasoline launches or battleships.

Towns are hideous from the air. We shall have to have a new type of architecture if we are to impress the air tourist and induce him to come down and spend his money in our midst; and this must comprise decorative roofs. No one but Santa Claus ever enjoyed looking down into a chimney. And we shall have to change a lot of other things.

True, we can park our airships on the tops of

our houses, which is not at present feasible with motor cars. And there is no question that decorative parachutes and costumes to match will be devised. We are quick to adapt ourselves to new conditions.

For instance, the pilot on this second trip showed me how to tie my handkerchief to a button-hole of my coat. It was too short to reach my nose, but that did not seem to bother him. When I untied it it was whipped away in the general direction of the Hawaiian Islands, and if I ever go up again I shall have my address on it in ink and a two-cent stamp.

But the most fatal thing of all at the present time to the popularity of flying is its unsociability. The pilot may have the profile of a Greek god, but if every time he turns it to speak it is necessary to shut off the engine, and one's heart stops too, it is difficult to think of a witty response. And mostly he does not turn it. All one has for company is the upper two-thirds of the back of a leather helmet. As a match-making proposition the aeroplane is a failure. And as for descending to some flowery meadow and there saying all the things he has been thinking up while in the air, I can only say personally that after two hours of flying I was stone deaf, and I wouldn't have known whether he was telling me he adored me or was saying he had a cramp in his foot.

I was quite deaf for some time. We landed at an army aviation field before a lot of ground mechanics and flyers, and if I expected that the removal of my goggles and discovery of my sex was going to make any sensation I was disappointed. D'you think they ran up and shook me by the hand and observed that I was a brave woman?

They did not. A man in overalls came up and I gathered by lip reading and his gestures that we weren't wanted where we were, and to move on down the field and park somewhere else. No newspaper men, no excitement, no cameras. Was this thing to be lost to the world?

I went to the hotel in full aviation garb. Now usually at that hour the verandas of that hotel are thronged with people. There were two elderly men sitting there alone, and they didn't look up. The hotel clerk shook hands with me and asked me if I had had a pleasant trip. The last time I had entered that hotel I was in riding clothes, worn very thin in certain places, with a 30-30 rifle hung to me, a bad case of sunburn from the Mexican sun, and a rolled-up deerskin under my arm. I hadn't shot the deer. This time I was in a complete department-store airplane outfit. D'you think he showed any surprise ? He did not.

I am going in there sometime in a full diver's outfit, including the helmet, carrying a dead fish

by the tail, to see if I can rouse him from his calm. But he will probably only slap a key down on the desk and mention that there will be moving pictures in the ballroom at eight o'clock.

CHAPTER VI

It is possible, although not probable, that I might still be flying, had not a small incident occurred on my fourth and last flight which put a brake on my enthusiasm.

We had landed in what appeared to be somebody's back yard, to pick up a parcel. It was quite simple. We came down in a field, taxied over a laid-down fence, ducked under the washing, and came up by the kitchen door. So far so good.

But when we turned and started off we seemed to have miscalculated our lifting power or something, for at the end of the field we just cleared a low shed, and our rudder did not. If it *is* the rudder which is at the tail of the thing. I never did know.

Anyhow there was a jar, and the roof of the shed seemed to lift a bit and then settle down. But we went on and up, and when my nerves had quieted I turned and looked behind. The rudder had been torn from its wires, or whatever they call them, and was swaying drunkenly as we rose!

I had no idea what would happen. Since rudders were to steer by it seemed quite evident to me that we could no longer steer, and that we would

have to go on in a straight line as long as our gas held out, and then—well, I knew we would come down sometime. Nobody has ever stayed up there for good. But how?

The situation was not relieved when we reached the flying field. Men began to run around, waving their arms at us, and generally showing excitement. But what they were showing was nothing to what I felt.

Then to my relief I found we could still turn. We banked steeply and went down, and at last we were taxi-ing like mad across the field, with our rudder bumping and leaping like a demon behind us, and no other harm done whatever.

But I had had enough. I have never been up since. Now and then I see great ships in the air, huge metal monsters with Pullman-finished interiors, and I think of that little mosquito plane and its flapping rudder; its strip of canvas under my feet, on either side of which was a space to peer down into eternity; of that handsome youth who took me up for the stunt flying, and who was killed a month later in that same machine. And I stay on the ground.

But I never see our army aviators go up without thinking back to the early days of the Great War. I used to watch the primitive ships of those days; one now can realize the air situation as it was when I first reached the front, in January of 1915.

Hardly more than strips of wood and canvas, those early airplanes, and so feeble was the Allied air defence that I myself have stood under a zooming German ship and watched the pilot and his observer calmly inspecting us beneath!

Nor were things much better by the time we went into the war. There can be no doubt that we sent many of our boys up to almost certain death, at home as well as abroad. Antiquated methods and hasty quantity production took their heavy toll of them. We had nothing ready. It takes months to dry the particular type of wood used for wings, and it must be cut and shipped from the Pacific Coast, or had to be in those days.

But with all of Europe seething like a cauldron, with an increasing foreign resentment of our prosperity and the possibility at some time in the future of an enormously powerful coalition against us, our short-sighted policy finds us almost where we were in 1917.

Like school children, we learned the lesson for the day and as promptly forgot it.

Wars will not be fought out in the air. But the battle of the future, on land or on sea, will be decided by the men in the air; the eyes of the fighting forces.

Why should we shut our eyes, when our enemies can see?

* * * * * * *

No, I am doing no flying now. My ideal airplane has a gas bag overhead, so that if there is engine trouble it can fly anyhow, and if lightning strikes the gas bag one can fall back on the engine. It will also have a catamaran arrangement beneath, in case of landing in the sea.

But the truth is that I am not seeking any adventure at the present time. I seem increasingly loath to go trouble hunting; perhaps I am tired, perhaps—well, there may be another reason, but let's forget that. Here I am, just back from a tour of the West Indies, and instead of doing it in some old hooker of a tramp steamer we went personally conducted! And liked it, too!

Still, there is hope. There are days when I waken up with the urge of the *wanderlust* strong in me; when I want to buy jade in China and furs in Mongolia; when the long-mooted matter of that trip after elephants in Africa comes into my mind and stays there; when I remember an old chest at Gibraltar I wanted and didn't buy.

And even without any of that there is still the ranch. It is April now. By the end of May I shall be on my way there, to ride off the winter dinner parties and Prince's six months' accumulation of spirit, and to clear my head of worry and of work.

The prairie dogs, Rose and Lily, will not be there to meet me. They are at the Zoo in Sheridan. But the old horse-shoe knocker will still be

hanging on the door, and the creek will rush and rumble at the back.

And I shall take off and put away my eastern clothing, and don my old breeches and boots. And then I shall go out on the sleeping porch, where the five beds used to be in a row, and see the newest and latest improvement.

They are putting up a bathroom!